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THE SINGLE NON-COLLEGE YOUNG ADULT AND THE CHURCH

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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May 1968

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It is estimated that the overall population increase between 1962 and 1970 will be 15 per cent among persons below fifteen years of age, 30 per cent among those fifteen to nineteen years of age, and 5 per cent among persons twenty through twenty-nine years of age.

Young Adult, The Young Adult World (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 2.

David Price, Shaping the Church's Ministry with Youth (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1962), p. 30.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Great attention has been given to the young people of America in the last few years. Statisticians have been predicting that beginning in the sixties the number of young adults would increase more rapidly than any other age group. This is seen as a natural result of the population explosion initiated during World War II. The post-war baby boom is now considered to be in the young adult period of eighteen to twenty-five years of age. It is predicted by some that this age group will increase 64 per cent from 1960 to 1975, while the rest of the population will increase only 17 per cent.¹ Today in the United States more than one out of every three persons is nineteen years old or under. Persons between the ages of twenty and twenty-four now number thirteen million, which is an increase of approximately two million since 1960. It is estimated that the overall population increase between 1962 and 1970 will be 15 per cent among persons below fifteen years of age, 30 per cent among those fifteen to nineteen years of age, and 34 per cent among persons twenty through twenty-nine years of age.²

¹Duane Mehl, It's a Young Adult World (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 6.

²David Evans, Shaping the Church's Ministry with Youth (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1965), p. 30.

Not only is the age group of the young adult growing numerically so that there are about thirty million today, but the modern single young adult in this country is an individual with unique needs, problems, and interests, according to experts in this field, and this poses a challenge for the church. The church attempts to serve people of all ages and situations in life, and this includes single young adults. How well the church has succeeded in understanding the world, needs, problems, and attitudes of the single young adult is a question deserving attention. Russell Mueller, author of The Young Adult Problem, presents the view that it is becoming more and more evident that there is a serious problem in the area of young adults within the church which cannot be ignored. He states:

Actually the average church has "lost contact" with the satisfactions and needs of the Young Adult and therefore it is crucial that we evaluate the young adult and "make contact" again.³

The question of how well the church has succeeded in understanding the young adult accordingly leads to the question of how well the church has succeeded in actually serving the needs of single young adults.

Many authorities point to the single young adult's lack of a sense of purpose in life. One single young adult states:

I feel that I am lost, that the world is being run wrong. Here all is death, nothing matters. There

³Russell Mueller, The Young Adult Problem (Thomasboro, Ill.: Mimeographed at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1966), p. 6.

is no center, top or bottom. Only the chaotic world is left, and it's gone crazy. It babbles, foams, and sputters like a⁴ dying sun and turns on its side to die, twitching.

When the church attempts to minister to such confused people, its efforts may meet this type of response:

In short, pastor, the average church stands as a perfect symbol of nearly everything I despise--false gentility, empty sentiment, emotional impoverishment, intellectual mediocrity, and spiritual tepidity. Maybe it's my pride speaking, but I just don't want to be identified with an institution like that.⁵

In the light of this type of response, some analysts of the problem wonder whether the church has much of a chance today to reach many single young adults with its message. Charles Mowry, author of young adult material, states:

The Church has no automatic opportunity to say its word. It is not listened to, is not consulted, is not included in the quest for alternatives. In order to be heard, the Church must become imaginative, creative, free from unimportant conventions . . . able to sympathize with the healthy aspects of rebellion.⁶

If many of America's single young adults are not listening to the church, then the question might be raised as to what forces are molding their ideas and thinking. Some authorities state that the means of mass communication, radio,

⁴Ross Snyder, "To Be Lonely: Its Experience and Structure for a Young Adult," The Wistful Generation: Reaching Young Adults Today (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 13.

⁵Roy Larson, "Memo to a Parson from a Wistful Young Man," The Wistful Generation: Reaching Young Adults Today (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 28.

⁶Charles Mowry, "Significant Efforts in Ministering to Young Adults," Religion in Life, XXXI (Summer 1962), 378.

television, music, and magazines all play a major role here. For example, Duane Mehl, author of young adult materials for the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, states that Playboy influences Christian young adults as well as non-Christians.

Playboy's going to be around for a long time. Young people in and out of the church are going to be reading it, especially in the colleges. It's one of those waves of the secular future.

Moreover, not just the beatniks, hippies, or draft-card burners have unique problems and concerns which the church could re-examine before attempting to understand and serve young adults, but also the sensitive, well-adjusted single young adults have their own unique problems and concerns which should be understood properly if the church is to attempt to serve them meaningfully.

Statement of Aim

The scope of this study comprises first of all a brief examination of past approaches of the church to youth, followed by an analysis of the single young adult according to his world, needs, self-perception, problems, attitudes, and requests. Assessment is also made of some selected current and projected programs for church work with the single young adult, plus the implications of the church's unique task in understanding and reaching this age group.

⁷Duane Mehl, "Playboy Philosophy Termed Symbol of Secularism," Lutheran Witness Reporter (October 24, 1965), p. 2.

Limitations of the Study

The problems, needs, and interests understandably vary when looking at the single non-college young adult, the single college student, or the married young adult. Since this study centers around the single non-college young adult, the authorities consulted and represented do not speak specifically to the problem of the church in relation to college students or married young adults.

Methodology

This study is essentially bibliographical involving the most recent publications and studies dealing specifically with the single young adult. Some interviews will be quoted, but only as secondary source material since the interview or questionnaire method is not the essential modus of the research.

Definition of Terms

Most authorities in this field define the "young adult" as an individual between the ages of eighteen and thirty. The term "church" is used in the sense that is most common, namely, as an organization or institution which is concerned with spiritual matters under the leadership of a pastor. As used within the delimited scope of this study, the term "young adult" is used to designate the single non-college young adult between the ages of eighteen and thirty.

CHAPTER II

YOUNG ADULTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Place of the Young Adult in Earlier Society

Author Roderick French writes in The Ecumenical Review that one can find almost nothing that deals in a direct way with the Gospel and the adolescent in the New Testament.¹ Albert van den Heuvel, Executive Secretary of the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches, says concerning the history of youth work, "The first and obvious remark must be that primitive societies have no youth work. In a primitive society one is a child or one is an adult."² The concepts of adolescence and young adulthood are evidently modern phenomena. The young adult citizen of our increasingly urban, differentiated, and yet conformist mass society is a creature unknown to the first century. In primitive society one was a child or one was an adult, and the period in between these two phases of life was as long as the initiation rites required, usually from a few days to a few weeks.

The difference between child and adult may have been marked by skill or a potential skill. For both boys and girls, sexual maturity coincided with adulthood. As long as

¹Roderick French, "Youth Work: Beginning a Theological Reflection on Its Collapse," The Ecumenical Review, XV (January 1963), 139.

²Albert van den Heuvel, The New Creation and the New Generation (New York: Friendship Press, 1965), p. 54.

this transition from child to adult was smooth and simple enough not to make necessary the period of adolescence and later young adulthood, youth work was evidently not considered.³ Even toward the end of the Middle Ages the young adult did not appear, because again, one was a child or an adult. The child was seen as the not-yet-adult who grew into adult life without much confusion or frustration. In the years to follow there were the disturbing and violent changes of society in its outlook, thinking, and structures which made it impossible for the young people simply to accept the ways of the adult in behavior or thinking. It was this type of atmosphere that brought about youth movements with emphasis on youth as a separate part of society.⁴ Youth work is pinpointed by Evans as starting in 1770 with the beginnings of student associations.⁵ Only then did the younger generation show a face of its own and not share any longer the same spiritual ideas with the older generation. Van den Heuvel points to the first glimpses of youth movement in the young men who in 1773 came together in the Bruderbund: "The 'Sturm and Drangers,' 19-26 years of age, 'with long hair and their shirts open to their navels coming together to cry, to sing

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 54-59.

⁵David Evans, Shaping the Church's Ministry with Youth (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1965), p. 13.

and to talk."⁶ Many of these young people were reacting against their fathers and homes. The houses from which they came were either pietistic, in which friendship had no goal but bringing the other nearer to God, or they were strictly orthodox, in which friendships were never permitted to express anything so subjective as feelings.

Student organizations also date from the same time. While young adulthood is still determined by physical changes, it also takes on psychological forms when the way of life of a society becomes unacceptable to the young persons. "When the adults in power do not have a recognized, but an assumed authority, a younger generation must struggle rebelliously to find new forms by which to live."⁷ The youth movement is forced upon the young people by a decaying adult society. It becomes clear that youth work is young, and that young people have lived in society until the eighteenth century without being organized. Commenting on the effects of the early days of the Industrial Revolution upon students, van den Heuvel states:

It was the young generation which first paid the price of technological progress: the experience of the parents was not any longer normative for them. The invisibility of the fathers' profession diminished their influence on their sons. The new problems of urbanization and collectivization were perhaps already known to the parents

⁶Van den Heuvel, p. 60.

⁷Ibid., p. 61.

but had not yet had time to penetrate into the schools and all other spheres of life.⁸

Prior to this time youth as a class did not exist.

With the Industrial Revolution, Western society lost some of its past stability, and youth became dissatisfied with unchanged lessons in a changing society. Society had continued to change, causing a continuing ferment among and about youth. By this time the student organizations and small groups of young people, organized in more or less secret societies, were normal phenomena in society.⁹ The Industrial Revolution gave a final blow to the unquestioned authority of adults, as van den Heuvel asserts.¹⁰ In a stable society protest is necessary. In a rapidly changing society the young person rebels against the authority of the parents. Until the time of the last half of the nineteenth century, the profession of the father was known to his son. If his father was a baker, farmer, or shoe repairer, the son more than likely would do the same. As soon as the factories became predominant, the sons would leave the house early and live in another world with different conditions and patterns of conduct. New questions arose for which many adults could not find the answers. The new mobility upset stable communities where

⁸Albert van den Heuvel, "The New Situation in the West," The Ecumenical Review, XV (January 1963), 163.

⁹Evans, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰Van den Heuvel, The New Creation, pp. 63-64.

people were born, raised, and buried among relatives and friends. The rapid change in living conditions with the rise of wages added to the unrest among the young people. Youth took on a social as well as physiological and psychological significance.

The Church's Past Approach to the Young Adult

The single young adult in the history of most Protestant churches has rarely been looked upon as a unique individual meriting special consideration. One look at the dates of publication of most bibliographical material will demonstrate that this is a recent movement. The young adult has usually been regarded as one who could be served adequately by the regular church organizations and Sunday morning worship service. A long time passed before the churches were willing to see the necessity of a specialized ministry to youth.¹¹ Although youth movements within the Protestant churches in general boomed in the twentieth century, especially after the catastrophe of World War I, van den Heuvel characterizes the period of 1915-1940 as that period of youth leaders rather than youth themselves.¹² Leadership training seemed more important than youth work itself. The youth leader, as confidante and friend of his followers, and as the central

¹¹Ibid., p. 76.

¹²Ibid., p. 65.

figure of the youth organization received too much emphasis. Oliver Cummings, once a director of youth work, says of this period:

Before the development of the Youth Fellowship, a state of affairs existed in the churches which was quite chaotic. Several organizations competed for the loyalty of youth with overlapping functions, gaps unprovided for, and with limited coordination. Wherever a new need arose, a new organization was developed--with a limited objective, but usually with full quota of officers and committees.¹³

Evans states that a new unrest about youth work was emerging around the middle of the 1950's and was ecumenical in scope.

While the churches, Baptist and non-Baptist alike, have given themselves to the renewal of the church, youth and workers with youth have wrestled specifically with the implications for youth work which grow out of insights into the nature and mission of the church.¹⁴

Authorities point out that to this day some churches are reluctant about youth work. In the history of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the single young adult has rarely been seen as a specific individual with specific needs.¹⁵ If he attended a parochial school as a child, it was assumed that this Christian education was an adequate foundation for his entire life. If young adults were involved in a Bible

¹³Oliver Cummings, The Youth Fellowship (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1956), p. 16.

¹⁴Evans, p. 15.

¹⁵Bruce Radtke, "An Examination of How Single Young Adults Regard the Church and Its Work Among Them," (unpublished research paper, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1965), p. 5.

class, it usually was with married couples or with high school youth. Important offices and duties were reserved for older adults, which may indicate a lack of trust in young adults.

Today's church often sees the young adults go off to the armed services or to college, or get married, and thus it is easy to forget about them. The church and its pastors may reply that young adults are not interested in the church, and that is the reason why no program is arranged specifically for them.

The whole situation becomes a vicious circle. The young people (18-23) do not go to church because the church has no program for them, and the church has no program for them because few are active and interested.¹⁶

According to the evidence examined, most Protestant denominations have given little thought to structured approaches to single young adults in the past. This was evident from the paucity of relevant materials and literature dealing specifically with this age group, most of which have been written within the past few years.

Summary

The Industrial Revolution initiated the separation of youth from adulthood. Up to that time one was either a child or an adult. After that, young people started asking questions

¹⁶Lawrence Reese, Youth Work in Today's Church (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), p. 16.

and forming their own particular groups and societies. Youth work boomed in the twentieth century in most Protestant churches, but often the emphasis was more on the leader than on the young person himself. Also, until very recently the young adult has been classified with young people or adults and has not been regarded or approached as a specific and unique individual of a particular age group. It is this unique period of life which is the subject of examination in the following chapter.

Many things happen during these years that will affect the individual throughout his life. Robert Havighurst, famous psychologist, describes the setting:

Of all the periods of life, early adulthood is the fullest of teachable moments and the easiest of efforts to teach. It is a time of special adaptability and unusual readiness of the person to learn. Early adulthood, the period from eighteen to thirty, usually contains a marriage, the first pregnancy, the first serious illness, the first experience of furnishing or buying or building a home, and the first venturing of the child off to school. If ever people are motivated to learn and to learn quickly, it is at times such as these.

While this study deals primarily with the single young adult, much of the above applies to him. Young adulthood is an age

¹ Ross Soper, "The Young Adult," Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XXI (November, 1931), 9.

² Robert Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: Longmans, Green, 1952), 3-12.

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD OF YOUNG ADULTHOOD

The young adult world is different than that of adults. There are aspects of life, many in rapid change, which are peculiar only to this age group. Ross Snyder, noted author, describes this period:

It is a time when developmental tasks are "itching" to be solved. Decisions are being made that will produce "greatness" in an individual. Here is an age group resolving questions that will represent a challenge to the "explosive frontier of our culture."¹

Many things happen during these years that will affect the individual throughout his life. Robert Havighurst, famous psychologist, describes the setting:

Of all the periods of life, early adulthood is the fullest of teachable moments and the emptiest of efforts to teach. It is a time of special sensitivity and unusual readiness of the person to learn. Early adulthood, the period from eighteen to thirty, usually contains a marriage, the first pregnancy, the first serious full-time job, the first illnesses of children, the first experiences of furnishing or buying or building a house, and the first venturing of the child off to school. If ever people are motivated to learn and to learn quickly, it is at times such as these.²

While this study deals primarily with the single young adult, much of the above applies to him. Young adulthood is an age

¹Ross Snyder, "The Young Adult," Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XXXI (November 1959), 9.

²Robert Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1952), p. 72.

of important and lasting decisions. Mobility and city life, social life, the search for morality, and the war age are all aspects of the world of young adulthood.

Mobility and City Life

Recent studies report the high rate of mobility of the American public. If one is to look at only the young adult segment of our population, it is discovered that this high mobility becomes extreme mobility. The transitional nature of young adults is demonstrated by the urban revolution now going on in our society. Duane Mehl states:

Young adult culture is startlingly evident in large cities. Two out of every three single young adults today migrate from the town and country to the city. They come for reasons of employment; but that is not the whole story. Many of them want to leave home behind. They want to go where "reality" and the action are. Reality and the action are in the city.³

In his study for the Young Men's Christian Association, Allen Ellsworth concurs with Mehl:

The lives of young men and young women are extremely unsettled. They are highly mobile. Six out of ten have moved from one city to another since reaching age 17 years. More than half have also moved at least once within the city in which they currently live. They expect to continue to be changing locations. Although only one in five wants to move his residence, more than half expect to move to another city within five years.⁴

³Duane Mehl, It's a Young Adult World (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 10.

⁴Allen Ellsworth, Young Men and Young Women (New York: National Council of Young Men's Christian Association, 1963), p. 1.

In Appendix A Ellsworth shows that four out of five young adults have lived at their present location for less than five years. About four in ten have lived there less than two years. More than half of the young adults have lived in more than one city since reaching age seventeen. Ellsworth notes that six out of every ten young adults have moved from city to city since reaching age seventeen with a fourth having moved from one city to another, another fourth having moved to two or three different cities, and a tenth having moved to four or more cities.

In the young adult's search for identity, intimacy, and ideology, he has shown a great attraction to the city. In the city young adults can become "the least integrated into society and social institutions."⁵ The high social and geographical mobility of these persons permits them to remain lost if they so desire. In his study of young adults for the Methodist Church, Allen Moore says that the unemployment rate is higher, the economic status lower, and the rate of living alone is higher for this age group than any other, with the exception of the aged who more often live alone.⁶ For many this is a completely new style of life. The vast flowing crowds of people, the noise of the great city, the job with

⁵Gertrude Selznick and John Larkins, What is Known About Young Adults (Berkeley, Cal.: Survey Research Center, University of California), p. 1.

⁶Allen Moore, Toward Understanding Older Youth--Young Adults (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), p. 13.

its daily time clock, the city standards of speed and precision, the entertainment whirlwind, and the social race are all contributions to the expression of the world of the young adult.

The church has been trying to work through groups with permanent membership rolls which are linked closely with the local congregation. Often a young adult's membership remains with his former congregation to which he no longer really belongs. When one's membership is not immediately transferred to a new church or some contact made, then this system breaks down. Charles Mowry, prominent author of youth materials, describes the situation in the following manner:

When persons are moving from rural to urban areas, from family home to apartment, from job to job or to unemployed roles, from apartment to apartment, they are just too mobile for our traditional approaches and procedures.⁷

If young adults are too mobile for the churches to keep up with them, then some new system may well help to keep in contact with them. Perhaps there are ways of channeling information about these persons when they leave their home towns, counties, and states to live elsewhere. The famous study directed by Merton Strommen for the Lutheran Youth Research suggests that the present system of church-mobile young adult relationship is inadequate:

⁷Charles Mowry, Toward a Ministry Among Older Youth--Young Adults (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), p. 14.

rural youth upon graduation from high school are forced to leave their small communities and go to urban centers to find work or go to school. With a few exceptions, the urban churches are not prepared to absorb these incoming youth and as a result these youth become spiritual nomads without a close congregational identification.⁸

In sum, this high rate of mobility in American life today is even more dramatic in the young adult age group.

Social Life

In this highly mobile age group of the young adults, of whom the majority live in the city, social life also becomes a vital part. Loneliness and separation are combated through socializing. Ellsworth states that friendships are very important to the young adults. "Equally important is a place to congregate with people their own age. The single young men and women especially like places where there are crowds of their peers."⁹ When these young people are confronted with the hurry-scurry life of the big city, they tend to look for friends. The growing rate of apartments and apartment groups designed specifically for young people is indicative of this fact. Young people gathered together can discuss their problems with one another concerning city life and other factors related to it. Ross Snyder explains the type of loneliness

⁸Merton Strommen, Introductory Report on Lutheran Youth Research (Minneapolis: Lutheran Youth Research, 1959), p. 18.

⁹Ellsworth, p. 2.

which leads to social relationships with their own peers:

Their world of meaning is pretty much limited to their own kind. They cluster in groups of mass culture sophistication and economic class. They have been taught by numerous college counselors, therapists, and novels that they will never become adults until they cut themselves off from their parents, make up their own moralities as they go along, disinherit themselves from traditions, and detach themselves from civic life.¹⁰

Social life and parties understandably become a big part of the life of the young adult. Here is where he finds companionship and security. This may indicate a point of contact for the church with the young adults, as George Gleason, prominent author of young adult materials and books, says, "Socials could be held in the church basement, with modern and old-time dances, a variety of games, and a light lunch."¹¹ While this certainly would not be the extent of a church meeting of young adults, this type of social life could play a prominent role. Young people tend to congregate together with their own peers, and the social life often becomes an important part of their lives.

The Search for Morality

Many people are confused about the meaning, the purpose, and the function of sex in society today. There are many

¹⁰Ross Snyder, "To Be Lonely: Its Experience and Structure for a Young Adult," The Wistful Generation: Reaching Young Adults Today (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 20.

¹¹George Gleason, Single Young Adults in the Church (New York: Associated Press, 1952), p. 1.

differing ideas about sex, and young adults especially have difficulty in deciding whom they should listen to. Traditionally society does not encourage sex relations before marriage, and generally, churches have considered such activities as sinful. While all periods of life have experienced some repercussions from today's emphasis on a "new morality," "nowhere is the American sexual revolution more apparent than in the lives of young people."¹² There is no doubt that one of the consuming concerns of young adults is sex. Mehl supports this:

Young adults give sex an extraordinarily high priority rating. It is talked about openly, analyzed, and practiced. Most young adults believe that sexual relations before marriage are an open option. After marriage many believe the same about extramarital relations.¹³

Grace and Fred Hechinger, authors of Teen-age Tyranny, state that due to a lack of training in the art of timing young people want what is available and desirable, and they want it now. Part of the reason for this is probably an unconscious desire to let the parents know that adolescence and dependence are a thing of the past.¹⁴ Young adulthood is a period of hope and expansion, matched usually by vigor and courage. Time seems less meaningful, and it stretches out into an endless

¹²Henry Grunwald, Sex in America (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p. 17.

¹³Mehl, p. 10.

¹⁴Grace and Fred Hechinger, Teen-age Tyranny (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publication, 1963), pp. 64-65.

future. Young adults want to have what they desire now, and many feel that they can accomplish this now in their world. Author Paul Maves writes, "The world seems to be something that can be dealt with. Sexuality and emotional intensity are major concerns."¹⁵

This "new morality" being espoused by many is the name given to contemporary standards of sexual behavior, drinking practices, and emotional instability. One concept that seems to be prominent in this new morality is freedom. Max Lerner writes in Sex in America:

People insist that part of their rights as American citizens is the freedom to do as they please without legislation or taboos to hamper them. They feel their "natural" right is the "pursuit of happiness" and that any interference with the attainment of happiness, as they want to pursue it, is a violation of natural law.¹⁶

The young adults are caught right in the middle of this new morality and traditional morality. Laurence Wylie, sociologist and author, describes the dilemma:

At church and school and home both boys and girls are told that it is wrong to express themselves sexually outside of wedlock. But walking home from school, in the locker rooms, at the corner drugstore, from newspaper stories, from movies and magazines and TV, they learn that ideal standards are false. The American adolescent must choose between observing the standards and feeling frustrated and cheated

¹⁵Paul Maves, Understanding Ourselves as Adults (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 143.

¹⁶Grunwald, p. 80.

or violating the standards, feeling guilt and risking social sanctions.¹⁷

Church and tradition tell the young adults to control themselves, and the new morality stresses freedom. The youth is "caught in the middle."

Mehl reports that some young adults say, "Sex is conquest. Love is surrender. Who wants to surrender?"¹⁸ This problem may become acute for the Christian young lady who is contemplating the possibility of a permanently single life. Mehl refers to the availability of contraceptives as another added pressure to premarital relationships.¹⁹ Part of the problem may be seen in the fact that often the young adult is intensely lonely. Snyder suggests this as one of the key problems of the age group, and that much sex activity is an attempt to find a meaningful relationship.²⁰ In contrast, Allen Moore states that many young adults avoid any valid relationship, seeing sex only as a leisure accessory. He states, "This casual sexuality is best represented by a cartoon in a leading male magazine. A young man embracing a rumped and disarrayed girl is saying, 'Why speak of love at a time like this?'"²¹ Mehl concurs, "Young adults are not very

¹⁷Hechinger, pp. 46-47.

¹⁸Duane Mehl, "The New Breed," This Day, XVI (June 1965), 6.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Moore, p. 11.

²¹Ibid.

romantic about sex. A sexual experience may allow for temporary intimacy, or for relief from chronic anxiety."²² Author Rollo May states, "Sex for so many people is any empty, mechanical and vacuous experience."²³

There are other reasons given for premarital relationships. Mr. Glassberg, author of "Sexual Behavior Patterns in Contemporary Youth Culture," states that heterosexual activities may represent three things:

(a) efforts to compensate for nonsexual affectional frustration, (b) surrender to peer group pressure to maintain status, or (c) abdication of the capacity for self-discipline and individual responsibility.²⁴

The young adult may feel frustrated, be pressured by his friends, or just plain give in. Glassberg uses the three words, compensate, surrender, and abdicate, implying that all of this is something passive. These three main verbs are in strong contrast to the active, self-realizing philosophy of today's new morality.

The new morality asserts that the former taboos about premarital sex should be reexamined and reevaluated. Hugh Hefner, editor of Playboy, discusses the sexual revolution currently taking place and proposes a new morality. He decries

²²Mehl, It's a Young Adult World, p. 11.

²³Rollo May, Man's Search for Himself (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1953), p. 16.

²⁴B. Y. Glassberg, "Sexual Behavior Patterns in Contemporary Youth Culture--Implications for Later Marriage," Journal of Marriage and the Family, XXVII (May 1965), 190.

American morality in nothing but negative terms and links it to the past. He describes it as:

an amalgamation of the superstitious paganism and masochistic asceticism of early Christianity and the prohibitively strict, severe, joyless, authoritarian, irresponsible book-banning, pleasure-baiting dogma of Calvinist²⁵ Protestantism, Puritanism, and Victorianism.

Hefner proposes to replace the present American morality with a new, more realistic, rational, human, and humane morality.

He states:

The essence of our code is that life is an end in itself, and pleasure is preferable to pain. Playboy is something of a handbook describing the life you can enjoy. Playboy tries to give the American male an identity and the right frame of reference. So if you spend the bachelor years doing what Playboy suggests, you wind up with a happy, more stable marriage.²⁶

This type of philosophy is fascinating to many young adults. According to it, sex assumes a new positive context, because it can teach young adults something about themselves. Mehl stresses the great impact that Playboy has on young adults:

If the new creed has any popular scripture it is Playboy magazine. Playboy preaches a doctrine of self-realization through the practice of pleasure and the pursuit of material success. It takes free sexual association, especially before marriage for granted (and provides pictures of nude girls to stimulate it). Alcohol is its sacramental element. The young adult readership of this magazine is numbered in the millions.²⁷

²⁵"An Infinite Number of Monkeys," Christian Century (August 28, 1963), 1063.

²⁶Diana Lurie, "An Empire Built on Sex," Life, LIX (October 29, 1965), 68.

²⁷Mehl, It's a Young Adult World, p. 14.

Moore concurs, "The apostle of the upbeat generation is the editor of Playboy magazine, Hugh Hefner."²⁸ Television, commercials, advertisements, magazines, and radios all emphasize the sexual aspects of life. This playboy cult is equipped with a handbook, symbols, styles of life, meeting places, a creed, and a moral code all its own.²⁹

While there are no actual statistics available, the number of young adults engaging in heterosexual activities before marriage is increasing, according to most authorities consulted. Winston Ehrmann, author of "The Changing Sexual Mores of Youth," says that data from several studies suggest that most men and between one-third and one-half of all women have experienced coitus prior to marriage.³⁰ In the world of the young adult there are continually heightening pressures pushing them toward the acceptance of this new morality. The whole atmosphere of their world emphasizes sex and a certain amount of permissiveness, and it is becoming more and more difficult for a young person to maintain his Christian morality in this world.

²⁸Allen Moore, "The Young Adult: A Study in Christian Communication in an Urban Society," The Transition Years (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1964), p. 17.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Winston Ehrmann, "The Changing Sexual Mores of Youth," Reference Papers on Children and Youth (1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth), p. 64.

In contrast to this air of permissiveness and freedom of the new morality, Mehl offers an alternative:

The young adult, for the sake of Christ, shall have to oppose "sex for sex's sake." . . . We must be careful here. God created all this "earthly stuff." We hope that young adults will rejoice because He did. Sex is marvelous. Let's say it. But sex is something that happens between people. It must be pursued in the context of God's purpose in Christ for us and the whole world of people.³¹

A Christian young adult should see the difference between the new morality and a Christian view of sex. Sex is something great and wonderful, as most people know. However, sex is an act of love between two people, not an animal act with anyone. William Hulme, author of young adult materials, states:

That which determines whether sex shall be a constructive or destructive power, or whether it shall be a pleasure that adds or detracts from our growth as persons, is our attitude toward it. When we separate it from the God who created it, sex tends itself to become God for those who seek its pleasure-- and the devil for those who fear its power.³²

Hulme urges young people to view sex with a religious approach. By that he means that they are to approach sex and view it as an expression of God the Creator. This is a more meaningful and lasting expression of sex that views it as an expression of love between two people created by God.

³¹Mehl, It's a Young Adult World, p. 25.

³²William Hulme, God, Sex, and Youth (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1960), p. 30.

The War Age

The world of the young adult today is affected by a war age atmosphere. Today's young adult is the product of some twenty years of post-war affluence in America, dating back to the Second World War.³³ He has been brought up to expect certain rights and privileges and a way of life. This affluent society affects what he has been accustomed to, and what he expects as a part of his life. Suddenly, however, he may realize that this affluence in society means that he is going to have to work for acceptance into it, partly because of the population explosion.³⁴

Today's young adult is also a product of some twenty years of cold, or not so cold, war. The Korean War is vaguely in his memory, but the Viet Nam War is very vivid. He sees many friends drafted off to war, and he himself may face the same situation. During the fifties and sixties he has been told that he will live out most of his life under sustained tension.³⁵ This may affect his entire way of life. What does he want to accomplish? What will he do if he is drafted? What will the young adult girl feel when her boyfriend is in Viet Nam? Where is the world headed? Will this type of fighting world

³³Helen LaFleur, "The New Student," What the Colleges are Doing, Number 123 (Winter 1963), 4.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

ever end? Where does real hope lie? Is it with the youth, and if so, in what way? This war age can cause many tensions in the life of the young adult, and it may change his course of life.

Summary

The world of the young adult is a world peculiar to that specific group. One aspect of it is the high rate of mobility of American young people. The majority of young adults move to live in the city, and this can be a completely new style of life which calls for adjustments. Due to the frequent practice of retaining church membership in the home parish, many young adults are lost in the shuffle.

Once in the city, a social life becomes a vital part of the world of the young adult. Sex is given an exceedingly high priority rating by young adults. The "new morality" calls for freedom of sexual behavior, and many are caught in the middle between the new morality and traditional morality. Today's young adult is also being pressured more and more to fall in line with the "sales pitch" of the Playboy philosophy.

In addition, the possibility of going off to war hangs over the heads of many young adults. Tension, doubt, and despair are a marked part of a war age period. In the next chapter an examination is made of the specific needs, attitudes, problems, and requests of young adults in order to gain a better understanding of the young adult person.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROFILE OF THE YOUNG ADULT

Needs of the Young Adult

The young adult in his social and psychological situation has various needs. Moore states that the main concerns of young adults mentioned by themselves are the following:

1. Sex, love, and marriage, including the fear of being unmarried
2. Vocation
3. Self
4. Personal relationships
5. Family relationships
6. Moral issues
7. Beliefs¹

Dr. Haskell Miller, noted psychologist, sees the needs of young adults as:

1. The need to be loved and to have security
2. The need to feel significant
3. The need for a sense of adequacy and worthiness
4. The need to belong, to be a part of a group
5. The need for self-expression and self-determination
6. The need to explore, to have new experiences
7. The need to understand the productive role of sex
8. The need for vocational orientation²

While these two lists mention various needs and concerns of young adults, most authorities mention four as the most basic: identity, intimacy, ideology, and generativity.

¹Allen Moore, Toward Understanding Older Youth--Young Adults (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 1962), p. 9.

²Ibid.

Identity

Ross Snyder defines the first of these needs:

Identity is the feeling "I am." I can cause things to happen. I think; therefore I am. At some significant points I am in charge of my one life, I am making myself and my world, I mean, I choose, I can ride herd on my conflicts.

I think I am a persistent unity--something which has a story and a history and will be (also has an imaged future). Sometimes I can see myself in one continuous perspective.

I participate in a world which partly knows me, seems to have a place in it for me, provides me an arena for battle. I know what is "not-me" as well as what is me and mine. This world is also a history--I am a link in a chain.³

The young adult is searching for authenticity and a truth that is truly meaningful to himself. He does not want to be merely another person, but a distinctive, unique person.

"Identity is both an experiencing of the self and a picture of 'self-in-a-world.'"⁴ Anthropologist Margaret Mead states:

Today's problem remains a search for a meaningful identity in a world which is seen as too large, too complex, too unpredictable, too likely to collapse into chaos, too weak to provide a framework for the individual life.⁵

³Ross Snyder, "A Design of Growth for the Young Adult," The Chicago Theological Register, XLIX (November 1959), 4.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Margaret Mead, "The Young Adult," Values and Ideals of American Youth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 45.

Donald Labrenz, a Lutheran pastor working with young adults, finds that meaning and identity in life are the greatest needs of young adults.⁶

Moore describes what may happen from over-identification:

The task of identity is answering the question--"Who am I?"--and working on what it means to be a person, male or female, to be or not to be. Discovering one's identity is to define one's personality in a social reality which is understood. It is not only a perception of oneself, but it is also a perception that others recognize. . . . Many older youth--young adults fall prey to over-identification. This is characterized by persons who overdress, or over-emphasize bodily figure. Many of the symbols of sex in the dress and actions of young men and women are⁷ only symptomatic of a lack of male or female identity.

Young people may over-identify in their search for a meaningful identity, and end up with a phony or meaningless substitute for real identity. The young adult must forge for himself some central perspective and direction. He strives for a working unity of what he has been as a child, and what he will be as an adult. He tries to find a relationship between what he sees himself to be and what others judge and expect him to be. He may settle for the easy way out and merely conform to what is expected, or he may strive all the more for a more meaningful and authentic identity of his own. Mehl sees this young adult period as the time during which a young person must establish

⁶Donald Labrenz, "Young Adults, Where Are You?" Inter-action (June 1967), p. 29.

⁷Moore, p. 23.

his adult identity.⁸ During this time he determines who he will be, and he sets his style of life.

Intimacy

In their search for meaning, young adults also have the need of intimacy. Author Gibson Winter writes that intimacy is "the relationship in which people know one another, support one another, share their lives and identify their interests with one another."⁹ Moore states that intimacy is "real 'meeting' which results in the affirmation of the other."¹⁰ Young people feel the need to have real friends. This is the opposite of a monologue experience, as it is a dialogue which results in experiencing the other side. This is a search for mutual recognition and a meeting face to face. For the single young adult this task of making and maintaining meaningful friendships with one's own sex as well as with the opposite sex is essential.¹¹ Failure in intimacy may lead to isolation and bitterness.

In this search for intimacy, young adults are more likely to identify with each other than to go outside of their peer

⁸Duane Mehl, It's a Young Adult World (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 8.

⁹Gibson Winter, Love and Conflict: New Patterns in Family Life (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1958), p. 70.

¹⁰Moore, p. 23.

¹¹Ibid.

group. Scattered friendships and acquaintances are no longer satisfactory, but the individual searches for a permanent other. Mehl states, "Young adults are more likely to identify with each other, either in small groups or in some form of relationship between sexes."¹²

While the majority of young adults may tend to search for meaningful and intimate relationships with their own peers, most authorities recognize the importance of an adult-guarantor. Erik Erikson, author of Young Man Luther, states that this is often the case. Since the adults have already achieved socially valid strength and recognition, their recognition of the young adult gives him an affirmation, a guarantee, that he is acceptable, that he has a purpose, and that he has a future. While some have claimed that these adult guarantors are merely father images, Erikson clearly denies that they are such substitutes, and he stresses that they are guarantors of the young adult's beginning identity.¹³ Snyder describes this process:

These are adults who recognize the young adult, and being the socially valid strength which they are, their recognition is an affirmation of the young person--a guaranty that, being started as he is, he has a future. But this also has its intimacy aspects, although it is an intimacy which has in it distance. The young person feels that he has to struggle with the adult, not give in too quickly

¹²Mehl, p. 10.

¹³Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1958), p. 125.

to the adult's views or allow his own individuality to be smothered in togetherness. Adults capable of this type of "masculine" intimacy "feed" the young adult by the very quality of their existence. Something passes from the other man into their own existence--a proto-type of communion as partaking of a man's body.¹⁴

Adults appear to have survived young adulthood and society and to have made a success of themselves. This gives hope to the young person that he too has a chance to be successful. The young adult, however, does not give in completely and conform and imitate the adult altogether. Rather, he struggles with him and fights to retain his individuality. He looks to this adult as an example to follow, but he adds his own personal traits and capabilities. These adults do not engage in judgmental activity, but rather they symbolize the successful attainment and management of adulthood itself.

Ideology

A third major need of the young adult is the acquiring of an ideology. An ideology offers an overly simplified and determined answer to those states and questions which arise in consequence of identity conflict. Erikson's recent formulations of developmental tasks lay new emphasis upon the acquiring of an ideology as a crucial growth of the young adult. Snyder explains ideology:

Ideologies offer overly simplified and yet determined answers to exactly those vague inner states and urgent

¹⁴Snyder, p. 3.

questions which arise in consequence of identity conflict. An ideology channels youth's forceful earnestness and sincere asceticism, its need for both repudiation and devotion, its search for excitement and eager indignation. It offers a combination of freedom and discipline, of adventure and tradition, and invites youth to a frontier where man's struggle is most alive.¹⁵

When young adults are struggling to find themselves, they are confronted with vague inner states and urgent questions. An ideology combines many of youth's feelings of earnestness, asceticism, repudiation, devotion, excitement, and indignation. According to Snyder, an ideology combines the extremes of freedom and discipline, of adventure and tradition. He adds that an ideology becomes a second mother to the young adult, "providing nutriment for the soul and selectively presenting a world within which vigorous growth and comradeship are possible."¹⁶

As Erikson sees the term ideology, it has a threefold complexity: world image, invitation to participate in a stream of history-making, and a relocation of the center of personal energy, in fact, a new conscience. He states:

at the least it is a "way of life" or what the Germans call a Weltanschauung, a world-view which is consonant with existing theory, available knowledge, and common sense, and yet is significantly more: a utopian outlook, a cosmic mood, or a doctrinal logic, all shared as self-evident beyond any need for demonstration. What is to be relinquished as "old" may be the individual's previous life; this usually means the perspectives intrinsic to the life-style of the parents, who are thus discarded contrary to all

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 9.

traditional safeguards of filial devotion. The "old" may be a part of himself, which must henceforth be subdued by some rigorous self-denial in a private life-style or through membership in a militant or military organization; or, it may be the world-view or other castes and classes, races and peoples: in this case these people become not only expendable, but the appointed victims of the most righteous annihilation.¹⁷

Ideology is a way of life or a world-view based upon what the young adult sees and knows. However, it is more than this. It is a utopian outlook which calls for a renunciation of the old life, and to the young adult this may mean his former way of life at home with his parents. This old life also may be a basic part of himself which he must struggle to suppress.

Snyder further explicates these three parts of Erikson's definition of ideology. First of all, an ideology is a world image convincing enough to support the collective and individual sense of identity. This can be summed up as an image of the universe and the person's place in it. An ideology is not a complete picture of the entire world, but a picture of the young adult's relevant world stripped down to its essential workings. Second, an ideology is an invitation to participate in a stream of history making. Snyder sees this demonstrated most ably by Communism. In its most radical form, this aspect of ideology is represented by the intense conviction of the Communists that they have an ideology which not only predicts the course of history, but also determines it. In any case,

¹⁷Erikson, pp. 41-42.

an ideology contains the possibilities of a sequence of events into which one can put his life. Third, an ideology is a relocation of the center of personal energies. In a sense, an ideology is a conversion which is permitted to take part in history making.¹⁸

In other words, an ideology is something that helps to make sense out of life and give it purpose. The young adult has need of such an ideology and is searching for one. Snyder emphasizes the openness in young adulthood for an ideology:

And so young adulthood is an age which can be most painfully aware of the need for decisions, most driven to choose new devotions and to discard old ones, most susceptible to the new propaganda of ideological systems which promise a new world perspective at the price of total and cruel repudiation of an old one. Potentialities within him seem to be waiting to be awakened and made into an ordered and powerful system.¹⁹

Thus it is noticeable that this world is selectively organized by the feeling of need and possibility. The vague blur of adolescence is leaving, and the individual often sees a goal and paths to that goal, including a description of desirable institutions. As Snyder seems to imply, Erikson states that late adolescence and young adulthood are the best periods for indoctrination with an ideology.²⁰ Snyder states that ideology is a more important part of the church's program for this

¹⁸Snyder, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 8.

²⁰Erikson, p. 42.

age than the church has often realized. The church should offer more opportunities to explore and understand alternate ideologies, such as the Freudian, Marxist, existentialist, biblical, and Tillich's. In this way young adults could see what these ideologies really are, including a Christian or biblical ideology. Also, the Christian adults should live out their own Christian ideologies before the young adults, because they are looking for adult guarantors.²¹

Generativity

In addition to these needs, the young adult also needs to find and express his own generative powers. Roy Larson, a director of adult work states:

Of great importance to the young adult is the confidence which results from his having proved that he is capable of producing, making a personal contribution, winning recognition, getting a response from others, and being taken seriously by his elders. Once his generative posers have been validated, he can begin to think of himself as an adult.²²

The young adult is now beginning to emerge from the almost exclusively receptive role of youth and is assuming the productive role of the adult. The young adult is on his way of leaving young adulthood to take his place in the world along with others who contribute and make things happen. He needs to know that he is capable of producing and making a contribution.

²¹Snyder, p. 11.

²²Roy Larson, Combined Report of Two Young Adult Consultations (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 1962), p. 14.

He needs to know that he can win recognition on his own right and be taken seriously by his elders. During the period of young adulthood he works toward this; but only when his generative powers have actually been validated can he begin to think of himself as an adult. Parenthood may have a role here, but not necessarily so.

Various Attitudes of the Young Adult

Data obtained about the attitudes of young adults regarding certain important areas of living and relationships provide a basis for better understanding this age segment of the population. Ellsworth studied the status, needs, interests, activities, hopes, and attitudes of young men and women in society and in the Young Men's Christian Association, and he published his findings in a book, Young Men and Young Women. The pre-list sample which formed the basis for the first two attitudes, attitudes toward parents and self-image, included 1,222 young adults. The males numbered 600 or 49.1 per cent, and the females 622 or 50.9 per cent of the sample. The age breakdown showed 37 per cent to be 18 to 21 years, 33 per cent to be 21 to 25 years, and 28 per cent to be 26 to 29 years. Group interviews of 119 persons formed the material for the young adult's sense of freedom, status in adult life, sense of being unsettled, and sense of pressure. Males numbered 72 and females 47. There were 47 per cent 18 to 21 years, 36 per cent 22 to 25 years, and 17 per cent 26 to 29 years.

Attitudes Toward Parents

Ellsworth attempted to secure and interpret data on four areas about the relationships of young adults and their parents: how the young adults described their fathers and mothers; how attached they were to their fathers and mothers; how much they believed they were influenced by each of the parents; the quality of discipline they experienced from their parents. Two-thirds of the young adults described their fathers and mothers favorably, but only a third felt strong attachments. Nine out of ten, however, felt reasonable attachment to their parents, while less than one in ten revealed unfavorable feelings about their parents. Sixty-six per cent of the mothers were perceived as being democratic in contrast to 55 per cent of the fathers.²³ Ellsworth sums up this area: "in spite of a seemingly close relationship on the part of many, less than a third feel that their mothers or fathers have had a strong influence on their lives. Many are struggling for emancipation from their parents."²⁴ See Appendix B depicting the attitudes of young adults toward their parents.

From this survey it appears that the vast majority of young adults consider their parents in a favorable way, and only a very minor percentage regard their parents in a hostile

²³Allen Ellsworth, Young Men and Young Women (New York: National Council of Young Men's Christian Association, 1963), pp. 52-53.

²⁴Ibid., p. 2.

manner. However, nearly two-thirds of those interviewed did not feel that their parents had a strong influence on their lives.

Self-image

More than half of the young adults responded that they felt themselves to be average in importance. One-third felt that they considered themselves as important persons. About half were "just accepting" or "drifting" in life. One-third expressed a real "zest" for life. Ellsworth asked what their goals in life were, and only one-third was clear and explicit. One-third implied that they were not entirely clear, and one-fourth revealed a total vagueness about any goals in life. When asked what kind of goals they were aspiring toward, nearly half were in terms of personal gratification, such as a car, clothes, and home. One-fourth revealed goals of personal ambition, that is, of achieving something with their lives. Less than one-tenth mentioned a desire to be of service to society and the world.²⁵ While the majority of young adults believed that they were of average importance or above, some indicated that they were merely drifting through life somewhat aimlessly, and a few revealed hostile and negative attitudes. The goals of the majority were not very clear, and those of the majority were of a tangible or personally gratifying nature.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 53-54.

In the group interview, Ellsworth discovered the following attitudes of acceptance of self:

We need to feel that we are really important.
 We want a sincere sense of belonging.
 We're looking for security.
 For the first time we are making major decisions on our own.
 We have the same desires and sets of values as other generations of the past.
 We are concerned with socially oriented organizations.²⁶

These young adults stressed importance, belonging, and security. While at the age of major decision making, they were striving to belong, be secure, and join a socially oriented organization. Above all this, however, they felt that they were important.

Sense of Freedom

One attitude of young adults is that they want to be assured of a sense of freedom. The main ideas expressed by those interviewed were:

We want to be free, independent, and have "fun" like everybody else.
 We are trying to find the "fun" of high school.
 These are the bright years.
 We do not feel responsible to society but rather that we should be allowed the freedom to enjoy ourselves and approach living on an a la carte basis with society condoning our actions.
 Don't see ourselves as problems either to the community or to the YMCA.
 We want no restrictions, either by others or ourselves.²⁷

Young people desire to be free, independent, and have fun like everyone else. Again, as in their self-image, many feel no

²⁶Ibid., p. 58.

²⁷Ibid.

responsibility to society and feel that they should be allowed the freedom to do whatever is enjoyable. Restrictions by others or by themselves are condemned.

Status in Adult Life

When questioned as to what they expect as their status in adult life, the majority of the group interviewed stated:

We want to be part of the total community life, social, political, and business.
 We are striving to achieve personal significance and success; to be recognized by the community.
 We are trying to get ahead in life; in a job and establishing a family.
 We are trying to create a place for ourselves; this is a challenge.
 We are looking forward to completing our education and getting a good job.²⁸

Young adults desire to be an integral part of community life in all its phases. They hope to achieve personal success and recognition and are trying to progress in job and establishing a family. They are trying to make a place for themselves in society and are expectantly waiting the end of their studies and obtaining a good job.

Sense of Being Unsettled

Many young adults feel a deep sense of being unsettled. They are searching for something more stable and meaningful.

²⁸Ibid.

The results of Ellsworth's interview are:

We're going on day by day trying to break through; some never do.

We're trying to get a better look at life.

We're in the in-between stage, but optimistic.

Life is what you make it and our goals are hazy; we're striving to get them clarified.

We are searching for something or someone to look to.

We feel unsettled; are making no particular plans for the future because of the draft and the world situation.

The future is uncertain; we are a bit afraid and frustrated.

We feel a part of the conflicts and tensions of society.

These are tough years, you either go up or go down.

We are suspended in the life process.

We are fledglings out of the nest trying our wings.

We know what our responsibility will be when we are married and settled down; we are resisting responsibility until that time.²⁹

Young adults feel unsettled, and although their goals are hazy, they are trying to be optimistic and get a better look at life. They are searching for something or someone to look to. Because of the war age and draft, some are making no particular plans for the future. Many feel the conflicts and tensions of society and feel like babes. Until they actually settle down and are married, some resist responsibility.

Sense of Pressure

The pressures and tensions of society are reflected by many young adults.

Life is extremely competitive; the pace is much faster; you have to push in order to get ahead.

²⁹Ibid., p. 59.

You have to make your own way; nothing is handed to you.

More often you are an "Indian" rather than a "chief" and that is very frustrating.

The adult world makes demands for more education.

This is a time for finding self; competition with others is important.³⁰

The competition and fast pace is felt by most young adults. They feel the pressures of forging out a life for themselves, as nothing comes without work. Some feel the sense of being one of the many, rather than a "chief" or someone with authority. The pressures of more and more education are felt, as is the stiff competition with others. In many areas of their lives young adults feel pressures to change or advance or do something.

Various Problems in Young Adulthood

Snyder sees this age period of the young adult as an era rather than a latency period. It is a much more significant era in life than is sometimes thought. It is a time when developmental tasks are "itching" to be solved. Decisions are being made that will produce possible greatness in an individual.³¹ There are many problems connected with this period that have various affects upon young adults.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ross Snyder, "The Young Adult," Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XXXI (November 1959), 11.

Loneliness

One problem connected with young adulthood is loneliness.

Havighurst states:

Early adulthood is the most individualistic period of life and the loneliest one, the sense that the individual, or at most, two individuals, must proceed with a minimum of social attention and assistance to tackle the most important tasks of life.³²

This is a period of individualism and loneliness. Many young adults are searching for intimacy or a meaningful relationship, and some of them have a hard time doing this. Some feel that they must adjust to life and mature with as little social attention as possible. Snyder quotes one young adult as saying:

I feel that I am lost, that the world is being run wrong. Here all is death, nothing matters. There is no center, top or bottom. Only the chaotic world is left, and it's gone crazy. It babbles, foams, and sputters like a dying sun and turns on its side to die, twitching.³³

This individual states a feeling of loneliness. He sees a world that is run wrong where only death seems to matter. He feels he is lost.

To be lonely is not merely being alone, for solitude is not necessarily lonely. Some people find tremendous creative opportunities in solitude. The bitterness of being lonely is the sense of a type of personal failure. Snyder explains:

³²Robert Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1952), p. 73.

³³Ross Snyder, "To Be Lonely: Its Experience and Structure for a Young Adult," The Wistful Generation: Reaching Young Adults Today (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 13.

If life consists of love, encounter, communication, fighting shoulder to shoulder for a common cause . . . if man's deep potential is I-Thou sensitivity, then to be lonely is obviously a sign that one has failed (and will fail) in the task of being a human being.³⁴

A lonely young adult feels that he has failed in becoming a real human being. A common conception of life consists of love, encounter, communication, etc., and if these are not a part of a person's life, he tends to think of himself as a failure. Loneliness equals failure. Paul Maves agrees when he says, "We feel deep need to be related to others, to be accepted, recognized, loved, and responded to, and that we are desperately lonely and anxious when we are not."³⁵ Another young adult expressed to Snyder:

When I feel lonely, I feel that there's no one I can talk to who will realize that I'm me. So there is not much use in doing anything worthwhile if no one cares. Loneliness takes the heart out of much that we would do. When I'm lonely, I feel purposeless, tired, confused, weak, and trapped. I picture myself as caught in a hard shell from which I reach out hands to grasp quickly the hand of another. When I feel I'm peeking out desperately from the shell--then I feel lonely.³⁶

Some young adults feel that there is no one to talk to who will take them seriously and see what they really are. This diverts them from trying to succeed and do something worthwhile

³⁴Snyder, "To Be Lonely," p. 14.

³⁵Paul Maves, Understanding Ourselves as Adults (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 52.

³⁶Snyder, "To Be Lonely," p. 345.

because no one seems to care what they do. And it is this very loneliness that removes the meaning and sense of purpose for doing things and succeeding. They reach out desperately trying to find someone or something to relate to meaningfully, someone who cares, and when this fails, they are lonely.

Aimlessness

Many young adults, like other modern people, have lost their sense of being and are strangers in their own world of existence. As has been described by others, author and psychologist Rollo May states:

man's tendency in our society of externals and objects is to move about in a state of homelessness, vagueness, and haze as though he had no direct sense connection with his world but were in a foreign country where he does not know the language and has no hope of learning it but is always doomed to wander in quiet despair, incommunicado, homeless, and a stranger.³⁷

Many young adults are hazy and uncertain about their goals and purpose in this world, and they sense few authentic directions for themselves. They feel different and alone, and they wait for something to give them a clue and get them going in the right direction.³⁸ The study by Ellsworth revealed that about half of those young people interviewed were merely drifting through life with vague goals and nebulous plans.

³⁷Rollo May, Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology (New York: Basic Books, 1958), p. 57.

³⁸Mehl, p. 9.

Most of these young people were thinking of goals primarily in terms of personal gratification. Less than one in ten mentioned any desire to be of service to society.³⁹

Many young adults request help in forming definite principles of thought and conduct. A young woman of twenty-two said that "the church should aid us in forming a good philosophy and outlook on life, through group work and individual counseling."⁴⁰ A twenty-two year old man added, "We need something to live by. There is need of guidance in a Christian philosophy of life."⁴¹ Author Floyd Reeves mentions that young people naturally desire to understand and feel at home in the world in which they live, and that they have an inner compulsion to find some degree of meaning and unity in life. Yet, he notes a questioning, suspicious attitude of disillusionment among youth.⁴² With indefinite goals and plans, many young adults request help in forming a philosophy of life with meaning and purpose.

³⁹Ellsworth, p. 3.

⁴⁰George Gleason, Single Young Adults in the Church (New York: Associated Press, 1952), p. 85.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Floyd Reeves, Youth and the Future (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1942), p. 112.

Anomie and Rebellion

The transition crisis from youth to adulthood makes young adults susceptible to the disorganizations associated with anomie. This is a term used by David Riesman in The Lonely Crowd which means ruleless, ungoverned, or maladjusted. The anomic person "tends to sabotage either himself or his society, probably both."⁴³ Selznick and Larkins describe the anomic nature of young adulthood:

In theoretical terms, young adults in our society are more likely than other age groups to be in "anomic" circumstances or to be characterized by "anomie." This is hardly surprising. Young adulthood is a period of transition marked by change, discontinuity with the past, unattachment, independence, freedom from responsibility. These anomic factors have strong positive aspects; they make for much of the ebullience and lightheartedness of the young adult years. But they also make for many of its difficulties. The natural concomitants of discontinuity, unattachment, independence are almost invariably some tendency to feel unsure about values and norms, some heightening of inner psychological conflict, some degree of anti-social and self-destructive behavior. For what the evidence is worth, the facts indicate that young adults are indeed susceptible to the pathologies associated with anomie.⁴⁴

Young adults are naturally susceptible to an anomic character because of the very nature of young adulthood as a period of transition marked by many changes. The young adult is striving

⁴³David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1953), p. 279.

⁴⁴Gertrude Selznick and John Larkins, What is Known About Young Adults (Berkeley, Cal.: Survey Research Center, University of California), pp. 2-3.

for independence, freedom from responsibility, and these bring with them some degree of anomic behavior.

Related to anomie is rebellion. Young adulthood has historically been an age of social and psychological rebellion. Young men and women have played important roles in initiating and carrying out reformations, revolutions, and social movements. They have questioned authority and pushed society on to reevaluation of its tradition. In his book, Growing Up Absurd, Paul Goodman suggests that there is a need for "real opportunities for worthwhile experience"⁴⁵ for the post-high school youth. He confirms what several other authorities say about the nature of the young adult. This age group represents in an exaggerated way human behavior in modern society. If a clue could be found to this age group, then there might be a clue for all society. There is one principle that appears to have validity as one observes the real needs of young adults: "if you don't provide them with certain things, they'll fill the gaps with eccentric substitutes."⁴⁶ Left to themselves with no clear goals and no worthwhile experiences, young adults may react with some type or form of rebellion.

⁴⁵Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 12

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 5.

Period of Transition

Moore describes the young adult years as a "twilight zone" in which persons are trying on adult life for size. It is a period of transition from youth to adult maturity in which persons are cast adrift from the moorings of old certainties and social patterns, and the young adult usually makes this transition outside of the family context.⁴⁷ Selznick and Larkins list several symptoms of this transitional nature of young adults:

1. Relations with their peers are often briefly intense but temporary and shifting.
2. Fear of being left out, and at the same time unwilling to be pinned down.
3. Unwillingness generally to become a part of organized groups.
4. Lack of concern with social problems and community values.
5. Social relations are predominantly informal.⁴⁸

The young adult is moving from economic dependence to self-support, from the unmarried to the married state, from leaving home to starting a home, from learning to doing, and from taking in to giving out. This transition usually involves leaving home, completing education, getting and changing jobs, and developing new attitudes. Another symptom of this period is "the sensation of being unauthentic or hypocritical in a

⁴⁷Moore, p. 9.

⁴⁸Selznick and Larkins, p. 1.

profound and essential way."⁴⁹ Many authorities and studies conclude that for many young people transition is a crisis. Moore states that the nature of the crisis may take three directions: "successfully making the transition, avoiding the transition, or breaking down in transition."⁵⁰ The difficulty of making the transition from youth to adult maturity is evidenced by the maladjustments characteristic of some young people.

Mental Health

In a study of Lutheran youth directed by Merton Strommen, attention is called to the fact that a number of youth in the sampling may suffer from poor mental health. Some of the youth "evidence a high anxiety and guilt component."⁵¹ This study indicates that poor mental health increases with the coming of young adulthood. Symonds' and Jensen's study of twenty-eight young adults finds that depression, guilt, and wishful thinking appear to increase in young adulthood over adolescence.⁵² They write that anxiety and guilt "tend to become more pronounced

⁴⁹Mehl, p. 9.

⁵⁰Moore, p. 9.

⁵¹Merton Strommen, "Introductory Report on Lutheran Youth Research," (Minneapolis: Lutheran Youth Research 1959), p. 22.

⁵²Percival Symonds and Arthur Jensen, From Adolescent to Adult (New York: Columbia University, 1961), p. 29.

as young men and women enter their twenties."⁵³ Erikson's study of mentally ill young people in their late teens and early twenties finds that many have failed in their adolescent struggle against identity confusion. They suffer from a feeling of being a "nobody," are withdrawing from reality, and in some cases, are attempting to withdraw from life itself.⁵⁴ Their "malaise proved to be related to the same sense of diffuseness which drives other young adults to incessant and sometimes delinquent activity."⁵⁵ Moore adds that schizophrenia is the leading mental illness of young adults. One-fourth of the patients admitted to mental hospitals have schizophrenia, and three-fourths of these are between fifteen and thirty-four years of age. "This may be directly related to the inability of many persons to integrate their lives as a step toward maturity, therefore resulting in the splintering or shattering of their personalities."⁵⁶ One of the symptoms of young adulthood is a tendency toward poor mental health due to many things, including identity confusion and inability to make the transition from youth to adult successfully.

⁵³Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁴Kathryn Close, "Youth and the Life Cycle," Reference Papers on Children and Youth (White House Conference on Children and Youth, 1960), p. 22.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 23.

⁵⁶Moore, p. 10.

Alcohol

Alcohol has a high preference rate among young adults.

Mehl states:

Alcohol, far from being an escape from reality, serves as a sacrament for the savoring of reality. As with sex, one may learn something about oneself from alcohol. Young adults today, with little sense of guilt or wrong, employ alcohol as a source of revelation, as tranquilizer, as aphrodisiac, and as oil for the machinery of conversation. The rate of consumption is rather high.⁵⁷

Further, Ellsworth discovered that drinking in moderation is considered acceptable among nine out of ten young adults. Ten per cent believe in total abstinence. About 70 per cent indicated that they drink in moderation, which means that 20 per cent accept it by others, even though they themselves are non-drinkers. More young men than women indicate that they drink to some extent.⁵⁸ One of the reasons why young adults feel a need to drink alcohol is that it seems to stimulate conversation, as Mehl stated above. It is also a source of revelation and a tranquilizer. Some attitudes mentioned to Ellsworth were that drinking is a symbol of status in high school and college, it helps young adults to loosen-up and alleviates frustrations, and one finds a sense of security in drinking.⁵⁹ Drinking alcohol is accordingly

⁵⁷Mehl, p. 11.

⁵⁸Ellsworth, p. 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 61.

quite common among many young adults for any of the various reasons stated above by those authorities consulted.

Vocation

Most young adults are exploring for a vocation. Job mobility is high. Mehl states concerning the young adult, "The job he chooses becomes one of his crucial identity markings. As an actor, for instance, his style of life will differ radically from that of an engineer."⁶⁰ Four out of ten have been in their present jobs less than a year. Only one out of five has been in his current job three years or longer. Almost half receive incomes of less than three thousand, five hundred dollars per year, and more than one in five below two thousand dollars. These young adults are not necessarily complaining about their jobs, in fact, three-fourths of them express favorable reactions to their incomes.⁶¹ One writer notes that the majority of young people interviewed by him saw "job future" as their biggest problem.⁶² The uncertainty about one's occupational future is a problem for many young people. Author Kenneth Keniston concludes that it is unusual

⁶⁰Mehl, p. 8.

⁶¹Ellsworth, p. 2.

⁶²Bruce Radtke, "An Examination of How Single Young Adults Regard the Church and Its Work Among Them," (unpublished research paper, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1965), p. 16.

for today's male young adult to plan very far ahead concerning his career because he is often more concerned with the present:

Only the rare young man has life goals that extend more than five or ten years ahead. The long-range goals, postponed satisfactions, and indefinitely deferred rewards of the Protestant Ethic are being replaced by an often reluctant hedonism of the moment.⁶³

Today many young adults are urged to prepare themselves for their vocation by receiving training with the specific intention of entering the labor force through trade, technical, or business training. This type of terminal occupational or vocational education in training is open to a person with high school education or possibly less which leads, not to further schooling or an academic degree, but to a job, and which trains the young adult in specific skills, enabling him to pursue a particular occupation and thus enter the labor force within a given time span.⁶⁴ The young adult comes into a social and cultural situation upon which automation is having an extreme impact. More than likely, he will be urged to prepare himself for a specific task, and once he is part of a company or industry, he may be urged to take special courses in order to keep himself abreast with the times and qualified to continue working in the increasing and progressing technology experienced today.

⁶³Kenneth Keniston, "Social Change and Youth in America," *Daedalus*, XCI (Winter 1962), 159.

⁶⁴Edgar Gossard, A Ministry to Business, Trade, and Technical School Students (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), p. 7.

Summary

Four of the more basic needs of young adults are identity, intimacy, ideology, and generativity. Being a distinctive, unique person is the substance of the search for identity. The young adult strives to make and maintain a meaningful relationship with his peers and also seeks to find an adult guarantor. He also searches for an ideology which makes sense out of life and gives purpose, and he tries to find and express his own generative powers.

Various attitudes of the young adult were examined. The vast majority believe that they are of average importance, stress a sense of freedom and independence, desire to be an integral part of community life, feel unsettled with hazy goals, and feel the pressures and tensions of society.

Various problems are connected with young adulthood. Young adults may find it difficult to find intimacy, and this may cause loneliness. Many have lost their sense of being and are leading rather aimless lives. The transitional crisis from youth to adulthood makes them susceptible to anomie and rebellion. This is a period of transition, and poor mental health may result from failure to make this transition smoothly. Most are searching for a vocation, and accordingly, many are urged to receive training in trade, technical, and business areas.

Having examined the profile of the young adult, an analysis of his relationship to the church is now in order.

CHAPTER V

YOUNG ADULT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CHURCH

Attitudes Toward Religion in General

Lewis Sherrill, author of The Struggle of the Soul, suggests that one of the demands upon entering adult life is that one accept "the responsibilities of religion and carry them at a mature level."¹ The plight of the young adult in regard to religion is probably similar to other adults in our society, but the situation may be more crucial for him since he may not have settled matters regarding the claim of religion on his life.

Much of the religion of many young adults is largely a general and inconsistent collection of religious cliches and moralisms. Maintaining the status quo and concern for moral platitudes often prevents these people from having a vivid faith. The study by Symonds and Jensen reports that interest in religion is remote and superficial, and that Protestants and Jews tend to neglect church attendance.² Ellsworth states that the religious beliefs of youth are not

¹Lewis Sherrill, The Struggle of the Soul (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 87.

²Percival Symonds and Arthur Jensen, From Adolescent to Adult (New York: Columbia University, 1961), p. 24.

matched by their religious practices.³ The studies of Gordon Allport have led him to conclude that no region of the personality claims "so many residues of childhood as in the religious attitudes of adults."⁴ Murray Ross, author of young adult material, adds, "The weight of evidence suggests that . . . the traditional resources of religion are not a primary source of help to young people."⁵ The older ideas concerning religion that young adults tend to rely on are not very definite or helpful. The struggles and even sometime shattering experiences of early adulthood may lead the person to a new religious orientation. Sherrill writes regarding the religious rebirth of young adults:

he may encounter some of the disturbing or shattering experiences of early adulthood which drive the self to seek for reorientation, or perhaps for rebirth and a wholly new beginning. Such a readiness for resurrection--that is, such a destroying of an old self with its complacencies--may come as a result of some overwhelming experience, as in times of personal tragedy, or family tragedy, or the social tragedies of war and revolution, and the like.⁶

The young adult may encounter various religious temptations, but there are two frequent ones. First, there is the

³Allen Ellsworth, Young Men and Young Women (New York: National Council of Young Men's Christian Association, 1963), p. 18.

⁴Gordon Allport, The Individual and His Religion (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 52.

⁵Murray Ross, Religious Beliefs of Youth (New York: Association Press, 1950), p. 148.

⁶Sherrill, p. 87.

temptation to accept passively the benefits and services of the church, but to let others carry the load and pay the price. Secondly, there is the temptation to interpret religious responsibility in a way which permits the individual to shield himself from the most searching demands of God upon human life.⁷ Some young adults avoid becoming involved in religion and the church and tend to let others carry the load, while others find the church a place to hide in order to avoid the real religious struggles.

Allport reports a study of religious attitudes and practices of 414 Harvard students and 86 Radcliffe students. He says that other studies support his findings, and that these are generally applicable to this age group of the young adult. His findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Most students felt the need for some sort of religious orientation.
2. There was generally expressed a belief in God, though views were not traditional.
3. Only about twenty-five per cent were faithful to theological dogma.
4. The majority maintained some form of religious practice such as prayer.
5. The majority expressed dissatisfaction with institutional religion, including fifty-six per cent who rejected the church in which they were trained.⁸

There is a general feeling for some type of religious orientation, however, these are interpreted in various ways, not

⁷Ibid.

⁸Allport, p. 44.

always traditional. The majority are not practicing the traditional teachings, but they do retain some form of religious practice, such as prayer. The majority are dissatisfied with the institutional church, and a slight majority reject the church of their youth. Edward Patey, author of Young People Now, states that most young people have some form of belief in God and an admiration and respect for the person of Jesus Christ, but he questions how much these attitudes are effective in determining conduct and moulding character.⁹

Professing beliefs in a God is not the whole answer, according to Ellsworth. Less than half of the young adults he interviewed were able to give specific answers concerning their beliefs, and about three-fourths were full of doubts and uncertainties.¹⁰ Concerning prayer, Ellsworth found that about eighty per cent of the young men and women expressed a belief in prayer, and that a high percentage do pray at least occasionally.¹¹ Although there is evidence that religion in general does mean something to most young adults, Ross states:

fifty per cent said they never discussed religious issues and another thirty-eight per cent talk about

⁹Edward Patey, Young People Now (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 99.

¹⁰Ellsworth, p. 18.

¹¹Ibid., p. 3.

them infrequently . . . less than twenty per cent find in religion a basis¹² or a compelling guide for their everyday behavior.

Half of the young people of this sample never discuss religion, and very few find religion as a basis for a guide for everyday living.

Ellsworth divided his sampling into negative and positive attitudes concerning religion. The positive attitudes about religion are:

Definitely believe in a superior power.
 Religion is important, even for those not believing.
 Religion becomes more real after a questioning period.
 We're trying to get roots and see the need for religion.
 Religion is important; it teaches a life code of ethics.
 The Bible must be interpreted to show its application to present-day problems and life.¹³

These young people believe in a superior power and see a place for religion. The importance of religion as stated here is that it teaches a code of ethics. The Bible should be interpreted and applied to everyday and present day life. None of these attitudes is specific belief in the Christian religion and Jesus Christ, but are general and vague. Except for the mention of the Bible, none of these are exclusively Christian.

The negative attitudes about religion are the following:

Have little reliance on a higher power.
 Young adults are searching, questioning, trying to decide what to believe.

¹²Ross, p. 149.

¹³Ellsworth, p. 60.

Don't believe the Bible stories.
 Many of us don't believe anything.
 There is a God; so what?
 We need more flexible doctrines.
 Religion is a "crutch for death and disaster."
 We respect a person even if he thinks he is an
 atheist.
 Most people have not gone through the process of
 finding what they believe.
 Atheists are different; they find peace within
 themselves.¹⁴

In contrast, some young adults see no need for religion and
 can find no place for the idea of God. The Bible is not
 always true, and many youth do not believe anything. There
 are many young adults who do not believe in God or religion,
 and who see no need for it.

Positive Attitudes Toward the Church

With the background of the young adult's attitudes toward
 religion in general in mind, a close examination of his atti-
 tudes toward the church in particular is in order. Ellsworth
 lists the positive aspects of some of the youth interviewed:

Sunday school is important; has a carry-over value.
 Appreciate the church after some rebellious years.
 We are supposed to be nice; the church helps you be.
 We need think what we can do for the church as well
 as what it does for us.
 There is a turning back to the church for the sake
 of the children when young adults are married and
 having families.
 Church is a form of public discipline.¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

Some young adults see the importance of Sunday School in building good character and the influence of the children on the attitudes of the parents toward the church. To some, church helps them be "nice," and it is a form of public discipline. While these are positive aspects, nothing very concrete concerning faith and Jesus Christ is mentioned.

One study finds that sixty-three young adults affirm the positive influence of the church upon them as young adults, while nineteen deny it. One man feels that the church helps him to be the treasurer of the congregation, and another is grateful for being able to participate in the congregational Every--Member Visits. A young woman says that she remained active in the church because she continued to participate in organizations after she was confirmed. A young adult believes that the sermons are on his level, and a young lady is indebted to the pastor because he talked with her when her father died. Another man believes that the pastor helped him with his vocational decision.¹⁶ According to George Gleason, these positive convictions that the church has helped young adults are not unusual:

In the expressed longings of these young adults one cannot fail to discern a moving love for church. United with this is a keen statement

¹⁶ Bruce Radtke, "An Examination of How Single Young Adults Regard the Church and Its Work Among Them," (unpublished research paper, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1965), pp. 27-28.

of their needs, and the conviction that the church can meet these needs.¹⁷

There are young adults who regard the church positively and see it as a help in time of trouble and need. Charles Mowry states, "There are older youth--young adults who are active young churchmen seeking to understand their faith and live it out in the life of their local churches."¹⁸ While these positive attitudes and statements are significant, there is also an apparent lack of understanding of the church, salvation, faith in Christ, and related meaning for Christian living.

Negative Attitudes

Most authorities and materials examined see a much greater emphasis and degree of negative attitudes toward the church exhibited by young adults. Mowry states that there is an indication that most young adults have a negative image of the church. It has become stereotyped for them as having a program for children and older people, mostly older women. Or they feel that the church is the defender of the status quo, unwilling and unable to change with the times and no longer relevant today. Other young adults see the church as a place

¹⁷George Gleason, Single Young Adults in the Church (New York: Association Press, 1952), p. 32.

¹⁸Charles Mowry, Toward a Ministry Among Older Youth--Young Adults (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), p. 12.

where they are told what is wrong with the world, society, culture, and themselves. The church has few positive directions, and it appears that it does not take its own advice to heart and practice what it preaches.¹⁹ Mehl says that few young adults go to church regularly or attend young adult Bible classes or groups. They do not usually enter into the activities of the average parish, and they are not elected to administrative or executive positions. Young adults usually are on the fringes of parish life. While there is no evidence of a widespread formal defection among this group, "most young adults today (particularly the single ones) are not involved in visible church activity."²⁰ Erikson states that young people would rather choose to face nothingness rather than submit to a faith that, to them at any rate, has become a "chant of pious words; a collective will, that cloaked only collective impotence; a conscience which expended itself in a stickling for empty forms, a reason that was meaningless busy-work."²¹ Alton Robertson, who is involved in youth work, says that the young adult is moving away from the church with a sense of guilt and despair, because "he confesses that he is part of the People of God but cannot

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Duane Mehl, It's a Young Adult World (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 7.

²¹Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1958), pp. 99-100.

affirm that the Church institutional is this People."²²

One young person related to Roy Larson:

In short, pastor, the average church stands as a perfect symbol of nearly everything I despise-- false gentility, empty sentiment, emotional impoverishment, intellectual mediocrity, and spiritual tepidity. Maybe it's my pride speaking, but I just don't want to be identified with an institution like that.²³

Consonant with such a view, many other young adults do not see the church as being relevant or needful to them, and few are taking an active part in the worship life of congregations.

Ellsworth finds that 90 per cent of the young adults that he interviewed claim to belong to a church. Less than 50 per cent claim to participate to a significant degree, and about a third say they assume some type of leadership in their churches or Sunday Schools. Only 10 per cent take part in some form of young adult group in the church.²⁴ Ellsworth finds the following negative attitudes toward the church:

Can take or leave the church.
Lots of church goers are hypocritical.
We go to church to satisfy our folks.
The church is twenty years behind what's happening.
Churches are more for social gatherings.
We need a broadened gospel.²⁵

²²Alton Robertson, "The Student and the Church Institutional, Theology Today, XIX (July 1962), 194.

²³Roy Larson, "Memo to a Parson from a Wistful Young Man," The Wistful Generation: Reaching Young Adults Today (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 28.

²⁴Ellsworth, pp. 2-3.

²⁵Ibid., p. 60.

These reveal the common attitudes that church members are hypocritical and behind the times. In addition, many admit that they are coerced to attend church by their parents, and they look to the church for social gatherings and activities. The feeling is expressed that the Gospel is too narrow and should be broadened.

One way in which the church has failed is in spiritual matters. One young adult says that his age group lacks many things, "but most of all they lack Christ."²⁶ The church has not filled the void, because it does not encourage or listen to young adults. This vacuum can make young adults question whether they are real members, since they are not participating. It appears that the church offers little chance to participate in the congregation and to function as members of the church. Little concern is shown in trying to help young adults grow up in their faith.

Mehl also raises this question when he quotes a girl from New York who writes to her pastor:

I live in an apartment with two other girls. When I go to church the preacher always talks about the family as the key to happiness. I don't have any family. Has the church any help for me?²⁷

²⁶Radtke, p. 9.

²⁷Duane Mehl, "The Absurdity of Being a Single Young Adult in the Church," p. 5 (This is an article which is scheduled to appear in Interaction in May 1968).

Mehl continues to emphasize this problem:

Let us be frank to admit that there is something vaguely unsettling about a single young adult loose in the church, and even in society. There is a widespread, perhaps unconscious, agreement among "happily" married church people that 25 year-old single males and females should get married. "There must be a reason why he or she hasn't married."²⁸

Most people in the churches do not think very much about the young single adult at all. Mehl indicates that often pastors do the same. Unmarried people are often restless, do not contribute very much to the financial budget, and do not seem to fit into any specific group pattern of the church. Church membership roles are usually made up of families. Thus those young adults who are vitally interested in serving Christ and the church are driven to become involved in inter-parish and inter-denominational activities. The average church is avoided by them because it is organized around the family unit, and single people do not fit in very well.²⁹

Another study reveals that many young adults sense that no specific organization is provided for their age group in their particular congregation. One young adult says:

The church has failed to provide a league-type organization for young people graduated from high school. Even a young working girl's organization would help, but there's nothing offered.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 3-4, 14-15.

³⁰ Radtke, p. 12.

Not all churches provide organizations specifically designed for young adults, and many of those that do have them are not reaching and satisfying young adult needs. One young adult says that the groups are not meeting his needs because they are not "geared to the needs of young adults today."³¹ Another young adult calls for more worthwhile projects and discussions to help bring in young people outside the church. His group, however, "decided there was no sense calling themselves a church group since they served no function."³² There are various reactions possible to this type of thinking and questioning of the young adults, and Robertson gives his reaction to such young adults:

We can write this group of students off as a minority. We can label them impatient when they speak out against institutionalism. We can be happy and content with all the happy and contented boys and girls who like things the way they are. We can do all this, and we do. It is an acceptable way of silencing prophets and much less brutal than stoning.³³

Attitudes Toward the Pastor

Many young adults feel that the parish pastor has not met their needs. One young adult says:

I often feel that our pastor is too busy or uninterested to get to know the young people of our church, and because of this he really doesn't

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Robertson, p. 197.

understand our problems or interests. There are times when I feel I could use his advice and would like to talk to him, but because he seems so disinterested it is hard to talk to him about personal problems.³⁴

This person sees his pastor at a distance, and because of this a wall is built between them. He cannot talk to the pastor about personal problems, because the pastor is disinterested, making it hard to relate to him. Interviews of youth by the Methodist Church Older Youth--Young Adult project finds that many young adults feel that the clergymen can not handle their problems. Among the images that they have of the clergy are: "Too busy, my problems are not important to him. He preaches me a sermon. He has already judged me. He is out-of-reach with where I am living. He answers to questions I am not asking. He is moralistic."³⁵ As this and additional evidence indicates, many pastors appear to be too busy to bother with young adults, and therefore they are disinterested. Often they appear to be judges who are enforcing old moralistic teachings. They seem to always be preaching, and they do not understand the young adult.

When asked why most boys and girls break away from the church, one young adult said:

Well, I don't think they've got anything to look forward to in the Church. When the preacher goes up into the pulpit all they preach about is Christ's

³⁴Radtke, p. 9.

³⁵Russell Mueller, The Young Adult Problem (Thomasboro, Ill.; mimeographed at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1966), p. 6.

life--they base the whole sermon on a piece of Christ's life. That's basic Christianity, granted, but it doesn't preach about something that's going to happen, something to look forward to, to give the young people something to base their religion on. It's too isolated, the Church--it doesn't come into everyday life. It's a thing on Sunday, a place to go on Sunday--it's too isolated.³⁶

To this person the sermons are based too much upon Christ and the past, and they do not apply or relate to everyday life. He seems to understand this emphasis on Christ, but he cannot see why it is not applied to present-day situations and the future. The sermons and the church appear to be isolated, out of contact with everyday life. All of this indicates that some pastors have not met the personal needs of many young adults. Mowry states that young adults will turn for help to a teacher, supervisor, doctor, or attorney, and that parents and clergymen are at the very bottom of the list for those who wish to be helped.³⁷ This may be somewhat exaggerated, because Ellsworth says that most young adults in serious trouble would turn to their parents and friends first, and then to church officials.³⁸ However, the point is made that the pastor is not usually the first one looked to for help in time of trouble by young adults, and often he is far down the list.

³⁶Patey, p. 99.

³⁷Mowry, p. 30.

³⁸Ellsworth, p. 45.

Requests of the Young Adult

Studies have also shown that the young adult has become confused and only involved superficially with the church, because the church's message has been general and has not spoken to his needs and problems or answered his ambitions and hopes. Some young adults look at the church as an unrealistic, out-of-touch entity. The representative of the church, namely, the pastor, often does not speak to the young adult in terms of his relationship to it. The church has little to say to the young adult's problems. The answers are often of superficial importance and do not relate to the problem or in any manner give a solution or a method for finding solution. Ross draws these conclusions:

71.9 per cent think that thought, or study, or discussion with friends is more useful and effective than prayer, church attendance, Bible reading, or discussion with a minister, priest, or rabbi.³⁹

This points to one of the requests of the young adult. In one study, 73 per cent preferred talking in small groups or with individuals.⁴⁰ David Riesman calls this trend privatism, which he considers a response to the feeling of helplessness.⁴¹ Keniston explains that he feels young

³⁹Ross, p. 146.

⁴⁰Radtke, p. 22.

⁴¹Kenneth Keniston, "Social Change and Youth in America," Daedalus, XCI (Winter 1962), 158.

adults react in this way because they put the greatest emphasis on their own private areas of life:

Younger people increasingly emphasize and value precisely those areas of their lives which are least involved in the wider society, and which therefore seem most manageable and controllable.⁴²

In addition, young adults would be able to withdraw from these contacts whenever they proved dissatisfactory.

This same study reveals that twice as many young people prefer contacts with individuals rather than small groups. This indicates that these young people wish to make their own contacts with individuals rather than have the church sponser group gatherings. Snyder emphasizes this need for person-to-person relationships:

A ministry of meanings does not exist unless it is also a ministry of relationship. The primal condition of a ministry of meanings is face-to-face conversation with just one other person.⁴³

This indicates that a real ministry to young adults must begin with person-to-person relationships. The young adult wants to be treated as an individual, not as one of a group.

Gleason advocates organizations specifically designed for single young adults. He states:

What they need is membership in a congenial group where they can find friends of both sexes, where they can feel important, and where they can build a sound philosophy of life. The church can meet

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ross Snyder, "A Ministry of Meanings and Relationship," Pastoral Psychology, XI (December 1960), 19.

this need by providing personal counsel, and leadership in an attractive group life.⁴⁴

Gleason envisions a well-organized group with leadership of three types: capable executive leaders "who know how to get things done," a trained discussion leader, and a counselor.⁴⁵

Such an organization would need a fairly large membership, something that small churches might not be able to provide.

Earl Schmidt states in his report on youth the following four desires of young adults:

- A. Structured program, yet an atmosphere of frankness, freedom for self-creation.
- B. Desire for intellectually respectable religion.
- C. Vital, honest, real, active, relevant faith.⁴⁶
- D. Wants answered, yet free exchange of ideas.⁴⁶

The following views can be drawn from an analysis of these four desires. The young adult looks at the church and sees in it either organizations geared for the middle age members (the ladies' circles, the men's clubs) or organizations developed for the teen years (the youth programs or the Walther Leagues), but no organizations for the years between eighteen and thirty, the years of the single young adult. Some churches have these organizations, but many do not. The young adult, therefore, requests an organization geared specifically to

⁴⁴Gleason, p. 2.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 79-81.

⁴⁶Earl Schmidt, "The Christian Young Adult," (St. Louis: mimeographed at Concordia Seminary, 1964), p. 1.

his interests and to his own age group. Gleason describes a possible format for such a program:

There is a great need for something to bind our young single adults to the church. They only way to help is by a club which offers a variety of programs. Socials could be held in the church basement, with modern and old-time dances, a variety of games, a light lunch. A short program of worship should be included at each weekly meeting.⁴⁷

Gleason sees the need for a structured program for the young adult with a variable format. This type of organization can help to bind the young adult to the church. In addition, the young adult also requests an organization in which there is freedom of discussion and self-creation as Schmidt's Point A demonstrates. Within this organization with a structured program the young adult desires an atmosphere of frankness with realistic discussions and answers.

Point B by Schmidt shows that the young adult with intellectual ability looks to the church for a religion which will be presented to him in intellectual terms. He is not looking for superficial and pat answers for the sake of answers. Rather, he wishes to think through his beliefs and be intellectually honest and frank. Point C is related to this, as the young adult requests realism, concreteness, and something on which to build. He looks for a basis for his faith, but this basis must be a realistic one, a vital, honest, and real faith. Coupled with this is the desire for an active and relevant faith that relates to his present everyday living.

⁴⁷Gleason, p. 1.

Through this realism his wants will be answered (Point D), yet there will be a free exchange of ideas. He requests a definite and real discussion and desires answers, but he wants these answers only after there has been an open, realistic exchange of ideas.

Gleason lists four requests of the young adult:

- A. They ask for facilities for recreation.
- B. They ask for guidance and counseling service.
- C. They ask for instruction in Christian fundamentals.
- D. They ask for representation in church management.⁴⁸

Young adults are in the age period when they are young, active, and full of energy. A natural desire of this age group is facilities for recreation, where they can let off some steam and have fun. Gleason lists three suggestions offered by young adults as to the facilities for recreation:

1. For years I have thought we should have a recreation hall, or concert hall where our young people could produce dramas, where they could romp and have a general good time, where we could have groups on Sunday doing activities around a table, and not be cramped for space.
2. Provide activities such as dances and coed parties at homes, beaches, and mountains. The church should take personal interest in the individual young people.
3. Let them feel free to use the recreational facilities in the parish house whenever they wish. By their taking some friend for ping-pong and other games, some young people might get interested in starting a young adult program.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 33-36.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 33.

Some young adults desire recreation halls or some place comparable where they can produce dramas, enjoy music, and in general have a good time. They desire parties, dances, and other activities sponsored or connected with the church. They may see the use of recreational facilities in the parish house as a step toward forming a young adult program and inviting friends along who might become interested in the church and this program.

The second request, Point B, by Gleason is one for some sort of guidance service where individual problems will receive attention. Many young adults realize their need for guidance and counseling, but it is not always available. They search for a place where they can get the best advice and help, and Gleason suggests that a full-time advisor for the young adults should be installed as part of the church staff.⁵⁰ This, however, is not always possible in smaller churches.

The request for instruction in Christian fundamentals, Point C, indicates a need and desire for instruction for those who have begun to reason, doubt, and question the beliefs, the realism, and the basis for their faith presented them by the church. Lawrence Reese states:

The church must provide experiences through which youth can learn to know Christ intimately, school youth in a knowledge of the Bible and Christian

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 34.

ethics, lead youth to a firm faith in Christ and loyalty to his way of life, and provide a continuing program of worship, study, service, and fellowship.⁵¹

He believes that a program with young adults naturally begins with Jesus Christ. More youth programs have failed because Christ was not given sufficient importance in the programs. Few young people will remain faithful to the church if membership merely means being part of an organization. They need a cause, a place to put their loyalty, and Christ offers this.⁵² The Christian young adult desires to know the Christian fundamentals, and many authorities believe that this plus strong emphasis on Christ are the keys to a successful youth ministry.

The request for representation in church management, Point D, reveals a weakness prevalent in many churches today.

Gleason states:

There has been a tendency for the older adults to run the affairs of the church. They refuse to see the church as a part of a dynamic society which, like any other institution, must undergo change to meet the contemporary needs of the people.⁵³

This tendency seems to exclude the young adult from participation in the affairs of the church, and it allows for no

⁵¹Lawrence Reese, Youth Work in Today's Church (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), p. 45.

⁵²Ibid., p. 44.

⁵³Gleason, p. 36.

official representation of the young adult group on the governing board of the church. The young adult asks that his age group be represented in all administrative bodies. He asks for a chance to participate and become an integral part of the congregation. Too often these are the "in-between" years, and he wants to be recognized as an adult and take an active part.

Because many young adults prefer an organization geared specifically to their age group, an examination of their requests of the elements to be included in a young adult organization's program is helpful. One study concludes that the majority of young people want a program with variety, and the vast majority expect discussions to be a vital part of the program.⁵⁴ Robertson stresses the importance of fellowship in the program of a young adult organization, but he does not mean party games and the like, but involvement in a common mission. He states, "To gather then has meaning, for they gather to study so that they may better serve and better interpret their faith."⁵⁵ In other words, a young adult organization searches for meaning, not merely entertainment.

In order to find meaning, many young adults believe that this search would be elusive unless the organization

⁵⁴Radtke, p. 24.

⁵⁵Robertson, p. 125.

has a leader. One study asked whether the young adults wanted as leader a member of the group, a Christian older adult, the pastor, or no leader. Thirty-two wanted a member of the group as leader, seventeen asked for a Christian older adult, ten requested the pastor, and nine preferred no leader.⁵⁶ While no selection has a majority of people favoring it, the indication is that the pastor is not always the most popular leader of a young adult organization. Often they prefer one of their own members or an older adult Christian as leader. Whoever this leader might be, he will be more successful if he becomes a member of the group and participates in the discussion when he feels that he can add something significant. Snyder states:

For a full ministry of meanings, the adult ought not just be a creative listener. There is a rightness in offering--as relevant--a significant feeling, experience, idea of his own.⁵⁷

However, the leader dare not insist on his way of thinking and try to force a decision upon the young adult group. The religious leader serves best who can take modern young people as they are and respect them with all their questions and have faith in the growth process within each of them.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Radtke, p. 24.

⁵⁷Snyder, p. 21.

⁵⁸Evelyn Duvall, "Peer Pressures on Youth--Present-day Challenges," Pastoral Psychology, XV (December 1964), 20.

While not all young adults select the pastor as the leader of their group, he does play a significant role in their lives. Often the pastor is the leader of this group, but Larson cautions against the pastor being too eager to reach the young adult, because in such a case the young adult might wonder, "What's he after?"⁵⁹ While the pastor is often the preacher and teacher in other settings, often dominating services, classes, and meetings, he will do well to adjust to the idea that he cannot dominate this age group.

Believe me when I tell you that if you're hopeful of communicating with people like me, you're going to have to get used to the idea that you may have a lot of waiting to do before you get a chance to say what you want to say.⁶⁰

This young person expresses the opinion that he wants to say what he thinks before he is ready to receive and accept the opinion of someone else. The pastor as leader of young adult discussions should not be a preacher, but a listener and sharer.

One study indicates that most young adults prefer to meet in informal settings, such as homes, in contrast to church meetings.⁶¹ Often young adults feel much more at ease in an informal, unstructured gathering away from the church. This would encourage a more free expression of ideas and

⁵⁹Larson, p. 24.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 25.

⁶¹Radtke, p. 26.

feelings. In this setting many believe that they can speak more candidly and frankly and be listened to in a much more effective way. Young adults want to be heard. They will talk about themselves and their situations in a free and accepting relationship.⁶²

One study shows that "those who wanted a young adult organization wanted it to enable them to be better prepared to share Christ."⁶³ Many young adults desire worthwhile and meaningful tasks. They tire of merely meeting and doing nothing else. They cry out to find meaningful tasks that will help their fellowman and the church. Patey describes ways in which young people can accomplish this:

It is certain that a man cannot love his fellowmen "for Christ's sake" until he has come to love them for their own sake. It is in hospital wards, approved schools, old people's homes, work camps, and overseas service that many boys and girls will for the first time begin to glimpse the God who perfectly revealed himself when a Man took a basin, girded himself with a towel, and began to wash the hot dusty feet of his friends.⁶⁴

These young people need to get out and work for Christ, whether it be in hospitals, schools, old people's homes, camps, or overseas service. They wish to do more than merely meet together, and these are various suggestions for meaningful service.

⁶²Ellsworth, p. 3.

⁶³Radtke, p. 32.

⁶⁴Patey, p. 94.

Many of the suggestions mentioned above would work far better in large congregations where the potential number of young adults is greater than in small congregations. Gleason deals with this problem, concluding that there are two main possibilities that are good options: either single young adults will remain in the young couples' club with occasional special meetings of the married and the single, each by themselves, or there might be a community group formed, in which a large church would offer to serve young adults from a wide area.⁶⁵ Thus young adults from smaller churches would not be severely hampered for environmental handicaps.

Summary

Many young adults have a general and inconsistent collection of religious cliches and moralisms as the content of their religion. Often they claim religious beliefs and church membership, but just as often this whole area is rather nebulous with little mention of anything specifically Christian.

While some young adults see some positive factors in the church, such as Sunday School and help in time of trouble, the majority reveal negative attitudes. Often the church is stereotyped as being for children or old people, and it has hypocrites. Many young adults see little place for them as individuals or as a group in the church, because the church

⁶⁵Gleason, p. 43.

is built around the family unit. In many churches no specific organization is provided for the young adults.

Many feel that the pastor does not understand them, and therefore he cannot help them. He may remain at a distance separated from them by a thick wall of indifference and unconcern. Some think that the sermons are too stereotyped and rigid, and are not applied to present everyday living.

Many young adults prefer to meet in small groups or with individuals, which indicates the importance of person-to-person relationships. Young people often request organizations designed specifically for their age group. Many desire a program with an atmosphere of frankness and freedom, an intellectually respectable religion, a vital, honest, real, active, and relevant faith, and a free exchange of ideas. Some seek facilities for recreation, guidance and counseling service, instruction in Christian fundamentals, and representation in church management. Most Christian young people desire discussions with an adult Christian as leader, and an informal setting for the meetings is preferred. They express a clear desire to be better prepared to share Jesus Christ in a meaningful and helpful manner.

A study of selected contemporary and suggested approaches to the young adult comprises the substance of the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER VI

SELECTED APPROACHES TO THE YOUNG ADULT

In this chapter examination is made of various approaches to the young adult by a number of Protestant denominations and individuals. This analysis is followed by a study of some contemporary approaches and programs.

Various Church Bodies

The Methodist Church

Of all the Protestant churches, it appears that the Methodist Church has done the most research in the area of the single young adult. Indeed, the major source of the data for the present study came from this church body. Recognizing that the ministry to young adults is one that has been disturbingly difficult and only partially fruitful, the General Board of Education of the Methodist Church in the early sixties saw that the opportune time was at hand for a new approach and emphasis in this specific area. In order to study, explore, experiment, and develop this ministry, an Older Youth--Young Adult Team of five staff members representing student, youth, and adult work in the three divisions of the General Board of Education was set up to work on this problem during 1961. As a partial result of the work of

this team, five reports have been published on various aspects of young adult work:

1. Combined Report of Two Young Adult Consultations by Roy Larson and Charles Mowry. (Some thinking about the young adult and the church)
2. Toward Understanding Older Youth--Young Adults by Allen J. Moore. (A study of contemporary literature and theory about these persons)
3. A Local Church Survey of Older Youth--Young Adult Groups by Lewis E. Durham.
4. Toward a Ministry Among Older Youth--Young Adults by Charles E. Mowry. (What is the church doing and what can it do?)
5. A Ministry to Business, Trade and Technical School Students--A Report of a Consultation by Edgar A. Gossard.¹

These consultations emphasized the need for a thorough study of factors related to an effective ministry among young adults. The somewhat awkward term "older youth--young adult" was used to describe those persons from eighteen to thirty years of age. Usually the church told those young adults who wanted to take seriously their Christian growth and witness to join a Sunday morning group for young adults. These consultations call attention to the changing culture among young adults and the marginal place that the church has in it. Few answers are given in these findings, because as yet very few are available. As Mowry says, anyone who enters into a young adult ministry will be entering into a frontier situation, because there is much to learn.²

¹Roy Larson and Charles Mowry, Combined Report of Two Young Adult Consultations (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), p. 3.

²Ibid.

Many other church denominations are dependent upon this pioneer study of The Methodist Church, as will be noted later. In these five reports some conclusions and proposals are presented. Allen Moore formulates the following conclusions in Report Number Two for an effective ministry to the young adult:

1. There seems to be real need to assist the older youth--young adult in identifying his problems, needs, and developmental tasks, and in finding avenues in which a struggle for salvation can take place. If the church fails to meet the real needs of these persons, they will seek the answers in an unchurched atmosphere.
2. Much research seems to indicate that healthy, mature persons are the result of a genuine milieu and relationships with authentic persons. This could be the church--when the church is the Church.
3. Local churches need genuine leadership (the gospel made flesh) who are able to understand the complexity of and to relate meaningfully to older youth--young adults. Such persons need to know the available resources in the community and how they may be utilized.
4. There seems to be a need to help individual churches work out a strategy for ministry which will assist the older youth--young adult in his real social situation and at the point of his real need. This includes assisting congregations to recognize that a uniform national program may be impossible for this age group because they have a variety of needs and are in many different life situations.
5. Some of the most intense struggles and searchings are taking place outside the church and these require a new way of working with people. It calls for a "ministry of dispersion" similar to that of historical Methodism.
6. There is need to recognize that "now" in the life of the older youth--young adult is the "pregnant moment." The tendency is to say that they will return to the church when they are older. But meanwhile they are making the basic decisions of life without benefit of Christian guidance or the calims of the gospel. The church needs to know that the present moment is all that we have and that the future has reality only because of the present.

7. Ministry to older youth--young adults must be unified but also flexible since older youth--young adults are at various levels of maturity. Findings in this study make it clear that persons called older youth and young adults are working on the same developmental tasks and have similar needs. On the other hand, these persons are in many different life situations and at different levels in their maturity.
8. Early adulthood is probably defined culturally and historically, but not chronologically. Labels, experiences, rate of maturity, social roles--all tend to be shifting due to the acceleration of social change.
9. The church must come to grips with the social situation as well as with individuals. For example, there is an explosive situation in the growing number of young adults who are unemployed, uneducated, and living in poverty in expanding cities. Also, evidence in this report indicates that older youth--young adults are at the age when they especially feel the influence of social pressures.
10. Persons moving to the cities need greater attention in order not to be lost in transition. Mobility is a crucial problem for churches depending upon organized groups to accomplish their work.
11. There seems to be a desperate need for older youth--young adults to have training and insights in human relations. A dominant factor is the failure of the older youth--young adult to relate to his own age group in satisfactory ways.
12. The young adult culture challenges the church so strongly and at so many critical points that should the church take seriously its responsibility to these persons, the life of the whole church could be revolutionized. This study may be a call for renewal of the church.³

Report Number Two states these conclusions tentatively for further consideration, experimentation, and research. These are not final answers, but they can prove to be helpful to

³Allen Moore, Toward Understanding Older Youth--Young Adults (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), p. 26.

improve the church's ministry to the young adult. These conclusions show the need to help young adults identify their problems and needs. The church should meet their real needs. A healthy, mature person may be the result of a genuine relationship with the church. Local congregations need genuine leadership who understand young adults, and there is a need to help individual congregations work out a strategy for this ministry. A uniform national program probably is not the answer. Since much of the struggling and searching is taking place outside of the church, there is a need for a ministry of "dispersion" to reach these people. "Now" is the time in the life of the young adult to work with him and help him. This type of ministry should be unified, but also flexible because these young adults are at various levels of maturity. Early adulthood is defined culturally and historically, not necessarily chronologically. The church should meet the social situation also, because this is becoming a bigger issue in the lives of young adults. Mobility and transition call for greater attention of these people by the church so that they are not lost. Young adults appear to need training in human relations, and this type of real ministry to young adults may revolutionize the entire church.

Mowry mentions fourteen proposals for Methodism's Older Youth--Young Adult Ministry in Report Number Four. He intimates that these are proposals which need much

experimentation before they can be put into effect and are not the final answers. They do, however, reveal the results of this study, Report Number Four.

1. "A ministry to Persons in Young Adulthood." Mowry proposes a ministry to persons approximately eighteen to thirty years of age, who are making the transition from youth to adulthood. This type of ministry should be flexible in its patterns, groupings, and locations. Its goal would be to enable and encourage individual young adults to encounter God in Christ, to experience a conversion or change, and to come to a personal awareness of mission or purpose expressed in daily living.

2. "Mission: Ministry." Since many young adults do not see the church as being relevant or necessary, the church should move into this area of work as a part of the very fundamental mission of the church. Those who are the church should seek to minister to the needs of the young adults wherever they discover them and their needs. The basis for this is God's call to ministry, and the effectiveness of this work with young adults is not to be measured by other standards than the simple standard of Christian service and ministry.

3. "The Ministry Must Be Flexible." This type of ministry to young adults must be flexible enough to embrace all kinds of persons and subgroups in this age group, including the married, parents, students, or any other combination that one chooses.

4. "The Ministry Must Be Unified." This ministry is at once educational, missionary, and evangelistic. This cannot be separated and compartmentalized, but must be a unified approach attempting to reach the whole person.

5. "An Accent on Young Workers and Vocational Education Students." Since many churches are engaged in college and university ministries, closer look should be given to a more effective ministry to the young workers, including those who for brief periods are in all types of occupational schools, colleges, or technical training centers. The church should invest itself equally in the many types of persons and groupings which make up the whole cross section of young adults in today's population.

6. "A Ministry That Overlooks No One." Since many inner-city churches are not serving the vicinity in which they are located, but rather are drawing people from the suburbs, the church should attempt to serve every one in its areas, including those who happen to be somewhat unlike the people in the local congregation.

7. "Development of Resident Centers." There is a need for the church to explore the possibility of ministry to young adults in and through resident centers.

8. "An Enlarged Voluntary Service Program." Young adult groups may be led to inspiring experiences and service by being useful to society. Their involvement in worthwhile

projects will help develop this needed aspect of maturity toward adulthood.

9. "Needed: Counseling Centers." One of the most frequent requests of young adults is for some kind of counseling center in metropolitan areas.

10. "The Use of the Connectional System." Methodism uses the connectional system by which it interrelates and consolidates the work of local churches for better efficiency in certain ministries and efforts beyond the limits of a local congregation. There appears to be a need for cooperation of local churches in this ministry.

11. "A Metropolitan Approach." Since most young adults are in the great cities and large towns, the focus of any effort to minister to these must be in those places. The church should study its ministry to young adults in every metropolitan area in America and develop an over-all, tailored strategy with guidelines for implementing that ministry in planned fashion.

12. "Staff for Metropolitan Areas." A trained, skilled worker for a young adult ministry in a city could be helpful. He could help the local churches recruit and develop effective workers, and be a communication channel between local congregations and their groups of young adults.

13. "Greater Freedom of Interdenominational Patterns." Since many centers, firms, residences, schools, industries, etc., cannot open their doors to a dozen or more different

denominational programs, the opportunities to minister are much more likely to be open to an interdenominational approach.

14. "Loan Fund for Occupational School Students." Many young adults drop out of occupational education due to a lack of money, and the church should seriously look at its resources to help students in vocational education through scholarships and loans.⁴

These proposals of Report Number Four emphasize many of the points of Report Number Two, and reveal the depth of study the Methodist Church has made of its young adult ministry.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

The Board of Parish Education of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is in the process of preparing a sixteen-unit quarterly curriculum for young adults. The units of this curriculum may be used in whole or in part, individually, or in a variety of sequences. More than half of them have been completed under the direction of the editor, Duane Mehl. He is commissioned to write three-fourths of the units and edit the remaining one-fourth.

This marks a new approach to the young adult by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. This is the first time

⁴Charles Mowry, Toward a Ministry Among Older Youth--Young Adults (Nashville: Older Youth--Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1962), pp. 29-32.

that this age group of the young adult has been taken as a distinct group with specific problems and thinking. Mehl is the full-time editor of young adult materials. The curriculum was begun in the fall of 1965, and the sixteen units are projected until July of 1969. A theological progression and conviction informs the structure of the curriculum. The progression leads from the creation of heaven and earth to the "new" creation of the heavens and the earth. It assumes that the Bible is in some way authoritative for the church, though no particular hermeneutics is forced upon the group process. The units have no teachers' manuals, and the members of a young adult group are allowed to react to the Bible as they wish, and in so doing they may refer to a body of resources which follow each chapter of study. In-depth studies of particular sections of the Bible are balanced off with topical studies and a few studies of major historical doctrines of the church, such as the doctrine of sacraments and Christ. Five units are based upon shorter books of the Bible, Colossians, Ephesians, Genesis, Job, and Jonah, while others draw upon selected portions of the Bible.⁵ See Appendix C for an outline of this curriculum.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has been involved in youth work for many years, particularly through the Walther

⁵"Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod," (Paper used by permission from Duane Mehl), p. 1.

League. However, it has been within the past few years that this church body has begun to approach the age group of the young adult in a separate and specific manner. There have been young adult groups scattered throughout many of the congregations, but they did not receive the attention that they are recently. A determined effort is being made to understand and help the young adult, according to Mehl, who states:

Because the young adult generation is caught squarely in a gigantic revolution in self-conscious and consciousness of nature and history, the curriculum must take for granted that young adults are threatened by meaningless, despair, failure in relationship to parents, church, society, abandonment--the whole existentialist panoply of emotional possibilities made popular by contemporary writers. Meaninglessness and uneasiness have made young adults remarkably willing to search and expose themselves, share with other young adults, seek profound relationship with members of both sexes . . . demand the right to develop a private morality . . . and search for identity in young adult clusterings in large cities and on campuses. The perspective of the curriculum, however, also assumes that the ultimate solution of identity for the typical young adult is success in the secular world. The young adult who despairs of self-realization and turns to drugs or collective nihilism is comparatively rare in our country.

This new curriculum attempts to approach the young adult as he is with all his questions and problems. Through a determined study and discussion program, this church body hopes the young adult may discover a deeper Christian meaning and understanding of himself, his faith, and his place in this world.

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

American Lutheran Church

The American Lutheran Church has recognized the need for a specialized ministry to young adults in the past few years also. In a "Young Adult Consultation of Resources" from the Youth Division, six major points are made.⁷ First, although the young adults seem readily reachable in the city, most of them disregard the church. Second, young adults resist any classification that the church normally uses for them in its ministry. Married young adults are different from the unmarried in role, but not in mind-set. Young adults do pay their way, and "young" makes them sound immature. If "lay and clergy" means "follower and leader" instead of peers, they quit. Often they reject a morality that has different standards for men and women. Third, young adults reject special handling or special challenges, but they do celebrate their uniqueness of belief and life. Fourth, a small minority would be pleased to be called Christian, but the majority would not be complimented with such an offering. Fifth, the present ministries leave a nervous feeling. Sixth, there is the call to remodel present structures and create new ones. The task is to find the remnant and call them to mission beyond the cultural borders that are closed to all of the old community. It appears that the American

⁷"Young Adult Consultation on Resources from Youth Division, American Lutheran Church Youth Division," (Paper used by permission from Duane Mehl), p. 1.

Lutheran Church is attempting to recognize the problems of a young adult ministry, and that it proposes to meet these problems through new and various approaches.

The Baptist Church

The Young Adult Ministry of the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication has been historically lodged in the Ministry with Youth Department of the Division of Christian Education. In 1965, because of the changing understanding of the nature of this age group, and because of the difficulty in ascertaining an age when young adulthood terminates, young adult ministry became a shared responsibility of both the Ministry with Youth and Ministry with Adult Departments.

Two factors have had direct affect of young adult ministry:

1. The last three years have brought an increasing awareness of the inadequacy of efforts in young adult ministry by American Baptist churches and agencies;
2. This has resulted in a serious examination and acceptance of guidance from the studies of the Older Youth--Young Adult Project of the Methodist Church.⁸

These two factors have called forth a consultative period in young adult ministry in which the Baptist church is attempting to discover direction for local church and agency efforts with young adults. This also implies a "holding" process which

⁸"The American Baptist Ministry With Young Adults," (Paper used by permission from Duane Mehl), p. 1.

means that the program and resources available will remain as is until after the consultative experiences. The first consultation was held in July, 1966, and the second in May, 1967. The American Baptist position as of January, 1967, in regard to young adult ministry was:

1. Awareness of existing inadequacies in American Baptist young adult ministries;
2. Appreciation of the Older Youth--Young Adult Project emphasis on ecumenical metropolitan young adult ministry, but seeing it as a partial response to an adequate ministry;
3. Concern over the young adult ministry of the non-metropolitan American Baptist Church or the church unable to accept the metropolitan orientation;
4. Desire of defining the program and resource responsibilities of an individual denomination.⁹

This report shows the state of flux that the young adult ministry of the American Baptist Church is experiencing. It notes dependence on the Methodist Older Youth--Young Adult Project and sees a real need for a reevaluation of this whole area in order to provide a more effective ministry to young adults.

Church of the Brethren

There is an increasing number of local young adult groups in the Church of the Brethren, and on the district level several young adult cabinets function. In addition to the encouragement of local young adult fellowship groups, there has been promotion of weekend young adult summer camps.

⁹Ibid.

The Church of the Brethren has used the literature in the field of young adults mainly from the Methodist Church.¹⁰

Disciples of Christ

In 1955 a mimeographed guide was issued to provide program suggestions for older youth and young adults in the Disciples of Christ Church. Encouragement was given for the total involvement of this group, ages eighteen to twenty-four, in the life of the church. In 1956 the cooperatively produced "Faith for Life Series" was introduced as study courses specifically for this age group. In 1961 the program responsibility for young adults eighteen and older was transferred from the Youth Work Committee to the Adult Work Committee of the Curriculum and Program Council. The Adult Work Committee is currently engaged in developing a philosophy of adult work, including young adult ministry.¹¹

In the light of the above approaches by various church denominations, it is apparent that ministry to young adults is relatively new and is still something of a frontier. The importance of this ministry, however, is recognized by many Protestant churches with the result of a reevaluation and rethinking of how to minister to this age group in a better manner. The Methodist Church appears to have done the most

¹¹"Young Adult Ministry Among Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)," (Paper used by permission from Duane Mehl), p. 1.

research in this area. But in sum, an increasing number of Protestant church bodies are making determined efforts to reach the young adult and are seeking to find new ways to make their ministries more effective.

Some Individual Suggestions

Many authors of young adult materials have made a thorough study of the young adult and his problems. Some have reached certain conclusions and have made suggestions for a better ministry to young adults. David Evans, Baptist author of Shaping the Church's Ministry with Youth, states that the church's ministry with youth has three "givens." They are the gospel, the world, and the person. The gospel is that which God has revealed to man, which he affirms and experiences and gives witness to. The world is the existential situation, and the person is the development of the maturing young adult.¹² He adds, "Another way of expressing it might be God at work in history; God and man in the contemporary scene; and man's response to the love of God."¹³ Evans recognizes the importance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the world in which the young adult lives, and the young adult himself. He emphasizes also that the church's ministry should

¹²David Evans, Shaping the Church's Ministry with Youth (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1965), p. 22.

¹³Ibid.

be "now" oriented, and that youth should be accepted as full members of the church today, not as members in training. By virtue of their youth they have energies and abilities now which will not be available to them later on.¹⁴ Evans makes three statements concerning ministry with youth:

First, much of what will be said about the church's ministry with youth will be person-centered rather than age-group-centered. Second, the word "ministry" is not to be confused with the clergy, or to be thought of as another word for program. Indeed, there are some who seem to use the term "youth ministry" to mean youth program. It is for this reason that "ministry with youth" is the term used here, since it more accurately describes what we mean to say. Third, ministry with youth means ministry to and by youth, and to and by adults who work with youth. Specifically, it embraces an adult-to/with-youth ministry, youth-to/with-adult ministry, youth-to/with-youth ministry, and adult-to/with-adult ministry.¹⁵

Evans states that a ministry to young adults should be centered on individual persons, and that this ministry does not mean clergy or program, but it involves much more, that is, a total ministry. This ministry with youth means involving adults and young adults in a mutual ministry to each other.

William Hulme, noted counselor and author of young adult materials, calls for a "total ministry" to young people. He states that the sermon should speak to the young person, teaching should speak to him, and societies should help him. Personal counseling can also help a great deal. The church

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 41-44.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 20.

should give them useful projects, such as evangelism, services in the church, visitation of older folks.¹⁶ Hulme summarizes his views:

The pastoral care of youth involves the total ministry of preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, and church administration. In his aggressive pursuit of these ministries, the pastor can mean much to the youth of his community. In turn the youth of the community can mean much to the life of the congregation.¹⁷

Hulme notes that ministry to young adults should be a total ministry including preaching, teaching, counseling, and administration. This type of ministry can help the young adult in all areas of life, including his Christian living.

Author Lloyd Burke states that there are some things that should become vital in a young adult worker's attitudes, life, and ministry if he would really serve the young adult.

1. The first is to accept him as he is . . . To be accepted by the church, despite his prodigality outward defiance of authority, failure, weakness, or ability is what the young adult really wants and needs.
2. The second factor is that he has something to give . . . We need to listen to the young adult, for he speaks the language of the day. His vocabulary, slang, and idioms are timely vehicles of communication.
3. And the third is a real sense of community . . . The young adult is looking for community, not only where he is tolerated, but where he is accepted and to which he can contribute.¹⁸

¹⁶William Hulme, The Pastoral Care of Families (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 134-138.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁸Lloyd Burke, "Ministering to the Young Adult in a Business Culture," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, XLIX (November 1959), 41-42.

Burke believes that vital to an effective ministry to young adults is the acceptance of the young adult as he is. In spite of his weaknesses and failures, the young adult wants and needs to be accepted as he is. Also, the church should realize that the young adult has something to offer by his very nature of being a young adult. His world and language are contemporary and relevant, and his vocabulary etc. can become important vehicles of communication. In addition, the church should provide a sense of community, because the young adult seeks a community where he is accepted and allowed to contribute.

Mowry states that the church has no automatic opportunity to speak its message, because it is not listened to or consulted. In order to be heard, "the church must become imaginative, creative, free from unimportant conventions."¹⁹ He stresses the need to try new approaches to reach the young adult.

Reese states some facts that should control the church's strategy in the future. He believes that the church needs more home cooperation, more adequate leadership, and a greater cooperation of pastors and counselors. In addition, the church should provide for the special needs and interests of the young adult with the church and community cooperating

¹⁹Charles Mowry, "Significant Efforts in Ministering to Young Adults," Religion in Life, XXXI (Summer 1962), 378.

to fulfill this common task. He cautions, however, against overdue emphasis on method without due regard to message.²⁰

He comments also on the church's methods and success with young adults:

1. Young people attend church services about as regularly as adults.
2. Enrollment in church schools, young people's societies, and catechetical classes is increasing, despite competition from outside and lack of parental co-operation.
3. The church has not been successful in winning youth through a mass approach.
4. The number of older youth who are active in our congregations is too small.
5. Youth programs frequently have not attracted as many boys as girls.
6. Youth's knowledge of the Bible is exceedingly inadequate.
7. Youth's Christian witness has been ineffective.
8. Certain features of the church's program have been quite successful.
 - a. The camp and summer school programs have enlisted thousands of young people in every area of the church.
 - b. The church's program of imparting careful instruction to young people preparing for church membership has been very helpful.
 - c. Youth's willingness to share large responsibility augurs well for the future of the church.
 - d. Youth have responded well to the call of stewardship and life service.²¹

While Reese is talking about youth as well as young adults, he does give some guidelines for work with the young adult.

He agrees with most authorities that the number of young adults active in the church is alarmingly small, and that

²⁰Lawrence Reese, Youth Work in Today's Church (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), pp. 28-31.

²¹Ibid., pp. 25-28.

their knowledge of the Bible is often exceedingly inadequate. He believes that the Christian witness of these young people has been ineffective, but there are also positive aspects. The summer camps and schools have been popular, and many young adults show a great willingness to share a large responsibility. Reese believes that the fact that young adults desire to contribute and share responsibility speaks well for the future of the church.

Most of the individual authorities consulted emphasize the same major points for a successful ministry with young adults. They emphasize that the importance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, of the church's message, should never be forgotten or given a backseat. The church should accept young people as they are right now, because "now" is the opportune time in their lives. They must be approached individually and be treated as respected and important persons. A successful ministry with young adults should be a total ministry including preaching, teaching, counseling, and administration. The church should understand that the young adult has something important to give and contribute to the church, and he should be able to find a sense of community, a feeling of acceptance in the church. In order that the church might be heard by young adults, it should be daring and use imaginative, creative, and new approaches. Better home cooperation and more adequate leadership can help in this ministry.

Types of Contemporary Approaches

The evidence indicates that there are hopeful and promising efforts being made in the life of the church for a better ministry to the young adult. Those who are answering the call to a better ministry are continually looking for a means by which they can effect communication and ministry. The following are variegated efforts going on in religious groups which are attempting to find contemporary approaches to ministry.

Programs in Operation

The retreat movement.--Getting away for a time from the activity in the world in order to deepen the spiritual life, to study, and to spend extended time in thoughtful prayer and meditation has long been a part of the Christian approach to life. Jesus Christ himself often went apart to pray by himself or with a few of his disciples. There is reason to believe that the retreat movement is one of the current thrusts in American Christianity which holds promise within a ministry to young adults. John Casteel, author of Renewal of Retreats, states:

To maintain, therefore, that retreat is its own reason for being is to affirm the conviction that the strongest, truest way to live out the Christian life in the world of daily living is to seek to come into deeper communion with God, into mutuality

with neighbor, and into a greater measure of wholeness in self.²²

The purpose of the retreat is to grow closer to God and to neighbor and become a better person through it. The retreat may take on many designs and have varied goals, and it may serve a person in several ways. The retreat for young adults might be focused in an atmosphere in which one may look at himself unhurriedly. It might provide a chance to think about the life and mission of the church, one's own vocation as a disciple of Christ, the application and expression of this vocation in his occupation, and the need of growth in Christian faith and Scripture. The retreat might very well be the one place of getting into communication with persons who are not a part of a regular church group.²³

In recent years there have been a number of lay retreats organized around a common occupation orientation and experience. The Rock River Retreats in the Chicago metropolitan area were two experimental retreats for teachers and office workers. Here the young adults were able to identify and work on the tasks of young adulthood as related to their various experiences.²⁴

²²John Casteel, Renewal in Retreats (New York: Association Press, 1959), pp. 29-30.

²³Mowry, Toward a Ministry, p. 17.

²⁴Ibid.

Resident Centers.--Mowry feels that the future might call for a program of ministry to young adults in and through resident centers. The beginning of such an approach already exists in the Woman's Division of Christian Service which maintains a number of resident homes for young women across the country. At this time these homes provide housing, friendship, etc., but with careful planning these residences might become the focus of a ministry to young adults. If such types of resident centers were established by more churches for both women and men, these could become vital to the young adult ministry.²⁵

Groups of Ten.--In a program aimed at young adults, some churches are developing what they call "Groups of Ten." These groups were first suggested by Dr. Frank Littell of Perkins School of Theology as a means of establishing primary Christian identity groups for young people. Dr. Littell states:

The three most vigorous advances in the church in Germany have been made by the Student Christian Movement (since the church struggle organized into student congregations, with pastors: Evangelische Studentengemeinde), the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag (the great laymen's rally of the church), and the Evangelical academies and lay institutes. Each of these has stressed the importance of Christian cell groups or "house churches." Each

²⁵Ibid., p. 18.

has stressed the importance of relating the Christian message to on-the-job decisions of Christian laymen.²⁶

Littell stresses the cell group of small numbers. As the group grows, it divides and becomes two groups on the principle of the cell. Such groups can provide meaning to young adults who may be without close friends, and who have trouble making friends in the larger associations of the church.²⁷

In these smaller groups a closer relationship and deeper understanding and discussion can be established. One example is the Mission Groups of the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. where eight to twelve persons make up a Mission Group that meets for study, prayer, and discussion.²⁸

Ministry to apartment dwellers.--One Methodist congregation employed a theological student as a minister of evangelism and assigned him the work of ministering to nearby apartments. At first his ministry was rejected and few of the apartment dwellers were active in church. After some time, however, little groups began to gather for informal discussions, and this grew to formal meetings in the church.²⁹ With the growing number of apartments in all the major cities, this type of ministry could become vital. One Midwest

²⁶Franklin Littell, The German Phoenix (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1960), p. 141.

²⁷Mowry, Toward a Ministry, p. 18.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 19.

metropolitan church found success in meeting the young adult through apartment study groups. The emphasis was on voluntary participation with no set formal structure. The leaders were young adult Christians living in these apartments. This church conducts an annual retreat to train leaders for these apartment groups. The clergyman attends one of these meetings only when invited, but the group is informed that he is available for personal counseling.³⁰

Inner city.--One example of inner city ministry is Christ the King Lutheran Church in Chicago. This experimental effort has had more than three hundred members. The purpose is to involve young adults in an experience which will integrate the need for intimacy, association with others, worship, and Bible study. There are no groups or clubs, and one's full commitment is being a member of the church. Study and worship are the primary focus of the church's life. Pastor Lloyd Burke meets with twelve persons each week to study a particular section of the Bible in preparation for the sermon on the following Sunday. The young adults study the section and discuss it in relation to their problems. The primary purpose of this ministry is to help the young adult live out his Christian life and faith.³¹

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

Judson Memorial Church in the heart of Greenwich Village in New York City attempts a planned ministry to the bars of the village, an art gallery, a teen-age center, a pool hall, a clinic for former addicts, a poet's theater, a dormitory, and a hall of issues. There were about eighty-five regular members, with some three hundred and fifty fringe members in the early 1960's. The average age of the members was twenty-eight.³³

Coffee Houses.--The Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C. attempts to minister to the needs of the young adult through a coffee house called "The Potter's House." Church members form the staff who not only serve tables, but also join in discussions and conversations and witness to the meaning of life that they have as Christians. To stimulate interests and discussions, art, drama, and films are used. In this informal setting this church hopes to minister to more young adults.³⁴ Concerning this, Robertson states:

The coffee house is his haunt and the small group for conversation his delight. He may, out of a sense of obligation, force himself to attend the meetings of his local denominational group, but he usually readily admits that he gets his real inspiration and ideas from unstructured, informal

³³Ibid., p. 20.

³⁴Ibid., p. 21.

groups that meet in the dorm lobby or at the local coffee house.³⁵

Robertson believes that the coffee house provides the opportunity for the church to reach many young adults who tend to avoid regular meetings at the church. This may indicate one of the reasons why coffee houses are popular today.

Suggested Programs of Service

Lawrence Reese, noted author of youth materials, suggests various ways in which young adults can be put to work. As noted earlier, young adults desire to contribute and do worthwhile projects. Reese mentions six areas in which the young adult can use his energy, contribute, and help the church. While these suggested programs of service are designed for the youth of a congregation, they do pertain to the young adult as well. Not all of these suggestions are as practical and probable as others, but out of this entire listing certain worthwhile ones do appear that might be what the young adult wants to do in order to feel that he is important and helpful.

Evangelism.--Youth action in evangelism might include making a survey of new families in the community surrounding the church or participating in an every member visitation.

³⁵Alton Robertson, "The Student and the Church Institutional," Theology Today, XIX (July 1962), 193.

Young adults might make calls on delinquent members or visit parents who are inactive, but whose children attend Sunday School. They might sponsor special enlistment efforts for a program for young adults and help prepare literature, letters, etc., to help in evangelism.³⁶

Teaching.--Young adults might be involved in teaching Sunday School and vacation church school classes. They could be leaders for special study groups, including their own. Some might want to work in the church nurseries and kindergartens and be assistants. Some could be involved in the church's audio-visual aids department as projectionist or librarians. The musical talents of certain young adults could be put to use in special programs and as teachers. They might be teachers and counselors at summer retreats, and be leaders for a congregation's leadership program.³⁷

Congregational projects.--Young adults might help prepare and publish a parish newsletter or paper or help guide the congregation's audio-visual program. They might serve in the church office and help conduct weekend camps. Dramatic and choral programs might fit in their area, and they could be in charge of certain special programs and services.³⁸

³⁶Reese, p. 103.

³⁷Ibid., p. 104.

³⁸Ibid., p. 105.

Social action.--Young adults might sponsor courses on preparation for marriage and family life and cooperate with important community welfare projects. They might help promote better relationships in areas of tension, and take an active part in the civil government. They might organize a collection of clothing and other materials for the needy and help in hospitals and other institutions. They might set up seminars on world order and related subjects, and plan interracial discussions and fellowship activities. They could assist and cooperate in interdenominational projects.³⁹

Stewardship.--Young adults might prepare feature articles on stewardship for church bulletins and plan a program of stewardship for the young people of the congregation. They could join in the every member visitations, share in the preparation of the congregation's budget and attend stewardship conferences and meetings.⁴⁰

Missions.--Sponsoring study courses on missions and missionary work might be a project for young adults. They could adopt missionary projects and invite missionaries and representatives to meetings. They might survey areas for

³⁹Ibid., p. 106.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 107.

proposed new mission congregations and help in the young adult programs in new missions.⁴¹

Fellowship and recreation.--The young adults could sponsor the congregation's program of recreation and provide the recreation for picnics, camps, summer schools, etc. They could arrange family nights at the church and sponsor fellowship programs for organizations.⁴²

Summary

The majority of Protestant church bodies surveyed are reevaluating their concepts and methods of ministry to the young adult and are attempting to strengthen it. The Methodist Church has done the most extensive research in this area to date. It appears there is a clear attempt by these churches to understand, reach, and relate to the young adult in a much more effective manner than in the past.

Most of the individual authorities whose approaches were examined emphasize the importance of the gospel, the need for acceptance, a total ministry, a realization of the importance of the young adult, and the need for new, imaginative and creative approaches.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 108.

⁴²Ibid., p. 109.

The types of contemporary approaches in operation demonstrate the creativity and imagination of certain individuals and churches which are attempting to reach the young adult. The religious retreat is popular, as well as newer ministries to resident centers, the "Groups of Ten," to apartment dwellers, in the inner city, and through coffee houses.

Various courses of action are available for young adults in the church in a number of broad areas: evangelism, teaching, congregational projects, social action, stewardship, missions, and fellowship and recreation.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Summary

The post-war baby boom of World War II is now considered to be in evidence in today's young adults of eighteen to twenty-five years of age. Currently in the United States more than one out of every three persons is nineteen years old or under. There are about thirty million young people in the age group eighteen to thirty.

The Industrial Revolution initiated the separation of youth from adulthood. Up to that time one was either a child or an adult. After that young people started asking questions and forming their own particular groups and societies. Youth work boomed in the twentieth century in most Protestant churches, but until very recently the young adult has been classified with young people or with adults and has not been regarded or approached as a specific and unique individual of a particular age group.

The world of the young adult is peculiar to that age group. One aspect of the period is the high rate of mobility of American young people. The majority of young adults gravitate toward the city, and this is usually a completely new style of life which calls for adjustments. Due to the frequent practice of retaining church membership in the home parish, many are lost in the shuffle. Once in the city, a

social life becomes a vital part of the world of the young adult. Sex is given an exceedingly high priority rating. The "new morality" calls for freedom of sexual behavior, and many are caught in the middle between this new morality and traditional morality. The possibility of going off to war also hangs over the heads of many young adults. Tension, doubt, and despair are a marked part of a war-age world.

Four of the more basic needs of young adults are identity, intimacy, ideology, and generativity. Various attitudes of young adults reveal that the majority believe they are of average importance, stress a sense of freedom and independence, desire to be an integral part of community life, feel unsettled with hazy goals, and feel the pressures and tensions of society. The young adult has various problems. In his search for intimacy, he may find instead loneliness. He may lose his sense of being and lead a rather aimless life. The transitional crisis from youth to adulthood makes him susceptible to anomie and rebellion. Poor mental health may result from failure to make this transition smoothly. Most are searching for a vocation, and accordingly, many are urged to receive training in trade, technical, and business areas.

Many young adults have a general and inconsistent collection of religious cliches and moralisms as the content of their religion. While some see some positive factors in the church, the majority reveal negative attitudes. The church appears to be a place for children or old people,

and the young adult sees little place for himself as an individual because the church is built around the family unit. Many feel that the pastor does not understand them and therefore cannot help them. Often the sermons are too stereotyped and do not apply to present everyday living. Many young adults prefer to meet in small groups or with individuals, which indicates the importance of person-to-person relationships. They request organizations designed specifically for them with an atmosphere of frankness and freedom. They desire an intellectually respectable religion, a vital, honest, real, active, and relevant faith, and a free exchange of ideas. Some seek facilities for recreation, guidance and counseling service, instruction in Christian fundamentals, and representation in church management. Most Christian young people desire discussion with an adult Christian as leader and an informal setting for the meetings. They express a clear desire to be better prepared to share Jesus Christ in a meaningful and helpful manner.

The majority of Protestant church bodies surveyed are reevaluating their concepts and methods of ministry to the young adult and are attempting to strengthen it. The Methodist Church has done the most extensive research in this area to date. It appears that there is a clear attempt by these churches to understand, reach, and relate to the young adult in a much more effective manner than in the past. Most of the individual authorities whose approaches were examined

emphasize the importance of the gospel, the need for acceptance, a total ministry, a realization of the importance of the young adult, and the need for new, imaginative, and creative approaches. The types of contemporary approaches in operation demonstrate the creativity and imagination of certain individuals and churches which are attempting to reach the young adult. The religious retreat is popular, as well as newer ministries to resident centers, in "Groups of Ten," to apartment dwellers, in the inner city, and through coffee houses. Various courses of action are available for young adults in the church in a number of broad areas: evangelism, teaching, congregational projects, social action, stewardship, missions, and fellowship and recreation.

Implications

In the light of the data, certain implications can be drawn. Because of the high rate of mobility of young adults, the church should reexamine its method of keeping membership records. Far too many young people are lost because of this. A concerned follow-up by the pastor of the young adult's original home congregation could be an answer.

A ministry to young adults should include social life and recreation. A program solely made up of prayer, meditation, and discussion may be unsuccessful. The young adult wants emphasis on his social relationships and recreational activities to maintain his interest.

A ministry to young adults should be flexible. There are no set patterns that will work everywhere. Some things will work for a while, but others will not. The program and ministry should be adaptable enough to be able to adjust it as interests change.

There is a need for good leaders of young adult groups. A good leader can often mean the success or failure of such a group. If the pastor is the leader, he should remember to be a listener and fellow member, not a preacher or judge. If someone else is the leader, such as an adult Christian, he also should remember to be a part of the group and help them grow no matter how slow the process. "Pat" answers will find little success. The leader should be familiar with group dynamics and the whole philosophy of sharing and discussion groups.

In the light of the programs examined, ministry to young adults in the future more than likely will call for new and creative approaches. Each congregation and each group may call for a different approach. This type of ministry is still in the frontier stage, and this calls for an imaginative and creative ministry. Some authorities suggest that greater success may be found through inter-denominational efforts, especially in smaller communities and churches.

Many writers feel there is little justification for the fact that young adults are usually not officers or leaders in the churches. The young adult has many talents and energy

that he will not have later on, and these could be put to good use. By having more responsibility in congregational matters, the young adult might feel that he is an important member.

There may be reason for the church to rethink its over emphasis on the family, which often makes the young single adult uneasy. More emphasis on the mature, individual, baptized Christian and his possibilities for Christian living might be helpful.

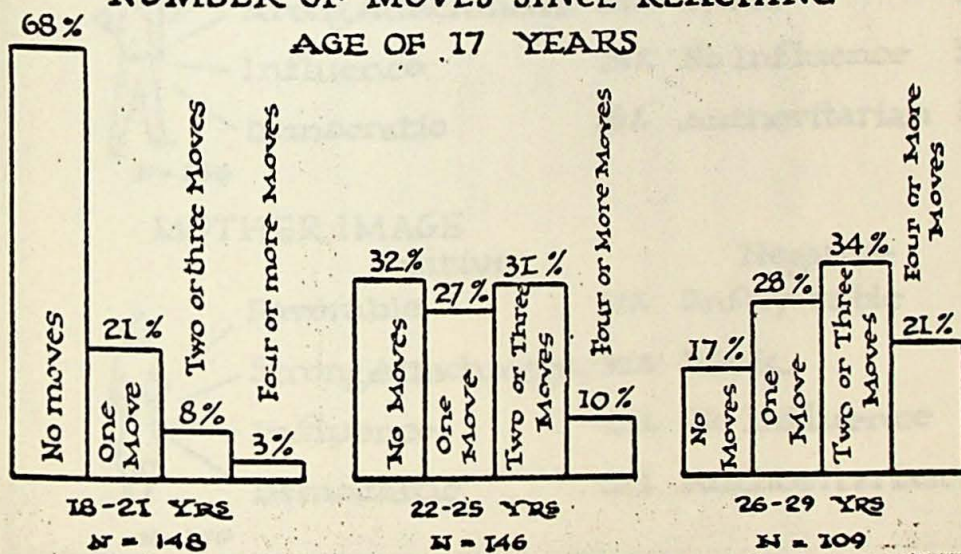
A clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and its meaning for the young adult's faith and life is needed even more today. There are many philosophies seeking to engulf the young adult, and a mature Christian philosophy is a necessity.

A renewal in the ministry to the young adult could very well affect the entire ministry of the Christian church. By re-thinking and reevaluating its approach and ministry to this age group and arriving at some positive answers, the church might be renewed throughout its constituency.

APPENDIX A

Chart II

NUMBER OF MOVES SINCE REACHING
AGE OF 17 YEARS




APPENDIX B

Chart XI


ATTITUDES OF YOUNG ADULTS TOWARD
THEIR PARENTS

FATHER IMAGE

		Positive	Negative	
	Favorable	63%	Unfavorable	5%
	Strong Attachment	28%	Weak	17%
	Influence	29%	No Influence	33%
	Democratic	55%	Authoritarian	33%

N = 358

MOTHER IMAGE

		Positive	Negative	
	Favorable	67%	Unfavorable	4%
	Strong Attachment	32%	Weak	13%
	Influence	25%	No Influence	29%
	Democratic	66%	Authoritarian	19%

N = 370

Young Adult Curricula

Creation and Fall	Acting Against Ambiguity	Dead or Alive in Christ	In the Church Without End
<p>October 1965</p> <p>The Good Earth</p> <p>Studies in Colossians</p>	<p>January, 1966</p> <p>Nothing Eucceeds Like Excess</p> <p>A Study of new currents in morality</p>	<p>April, 1966</p> <p>No Masquerade</p> <p>The Divine-Human Christ</p>	<p>July, 1966</p> <p>Scattered on the Mountains</p> <p>A Study of the Sacraments</p>
<p>October 1966</p> <p>Fail-Safe?</p> <p>A Study of Genesis</p>	<p>January, 1967</p> <p>Pandora's Box</p> <p>The meaning of cruelty and prejudice</p>	<p>April, 1967</p> <p>The Reluctant Dragons</p> <p>Biblical Personalities in Covenant</p>	<p>July, 1967</p> <p>The Church is an Anvil</p> <p>The church and the Holy Spirit</p>
<p>October, 1967</p> <p>Not With a Bang But a Whimper</p> <p>A Study of the Book of Job</p>	<p>January, 1968</p> <p>Made in Heaven</p> <p>A Study of marriage and sexual relationship</p>	<p>April, 1968</p> <p>This Congregated Ball</p> <p>Modern problems against the backdrop of creation, Incarnation</p>	<p>July, 1968</p> <p>Overboard</p> <p>A Study of the Book of Jonah</p>
<p>October, 1968</p> <p>Help My Unbelief</p> <p>A Study of Ecclesiastes</p>	<p>January, 1969</p> <p>A Fast Buck</p> <p>Vocation and Stewardship</p>	<p>April, 1969</p> <p>All Things to all Men</p> <p>Studies in the Life of</p>	<p>July, 1969</p> <p>In the Beginning Was the End</p> <p>The Resurrection of the Body</p>

APPENDIX C

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